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Thesis

THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF GOD IN ISRAEL

Submitted by

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(A.B., Southwestern, 1911)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

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THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF GOD IN ISRAEL

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NATION TO THE LITERARY PROPHETS

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COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

In his well-known book "The Christ of the Indian Road", Dr. E. Stanley Jones defines a position he has adopted while presenting Christ in India. As a young missionary he had drawn from both the Old and the New Testaments as the literature setting forth the Christian ideal of life; later he became convinced that he was attempting to defend too large a field. By resetting the first stake from the outer boundary of Genesis to that of Matthew's Gospel, and confining himself to the New Testament he finds ample resource for his needs. Meanwhile, the Old Testament, which served as a background for the ministry of Jesus Christ, becomes negligible in the ministry of my illustrious fellow-missionary.

Yet, living in a land of Hindu gods and goddesses who in function, rite and ceremony, make the same appeal to the popular mind as did that pantheon which held ancient Canaan in thrall, and which all but engulfed Israel during her "Middle Ages" of syncretistic worship, I question whether the New Testament alone can best serve the Hindu. He may be seeking to break with pantheism and to find the personal God denied him even by Brahma as creator in a world where 'nothing begins and nothing ends'. Knowing only the deifying forces and 'instincts tropical as the climate', with multitudinous incarnations and reincarnations[1], he has never reached an ethical and spiritual monotheism. Might not the record of Israel's long

struggle to attain this monotheism encourage him to leave past achievements behind and to reach forward to future attainments in the new order?

And what of the red-fezzed Muslim who so proudly claims descent from Abraham and Hagar? Is the alluring history of Abraham's Hebrew descendants to be closed to this student? He may be covertly seeking, not Jesus Christ, but the Christian's God, for, monotheist though he is, he may be quietly probing the depths of that fatalism imposed by a stern and supremely sovereign God who is 'the ultimate will acting through all the chaos and confusion of the world'. Even when beneficent, this inexorable will weakens the initiative of man, while the shadow of Kismet, as a soporific, induces resignation, slothfulness or stagnation according to his temperament.[2]

East Indians are today accepting the guidance of the Spirit of Science in all but religion, but this will surely follow. Under wise spiritual leadership, they should attain new freedom in this field - an emancipation even greater than our own has been. They are well aware that for decades we have been investigating their sacred books. Have we a <u>right</u> to do this while withholding any considerable portion of our own? Further, have we a sound <u>reason</u> for withholding the Old Testament?

In theory, no; in practice, yes. Today any youth of fair education may approach the Westerner in India,

eager to borrow a Bible to read. The majority may be satisfied to receive a New Testament only, but a second request is likely to follow, any hour. "Now, by your kindness, I am ready for your Old Testament." The missionary hesitates; she sets forth the advantages of first mastering the New Testament by further, directed study, or, producing a Bible, she carefully outlines a plan by which it may be most profitably read. With his usual courtesy the Easterner hears her through and departs, then, with his usual patience, reads it all, just as it stands, book after book.

Considering the happier outcome that might have been, could she have first sufficiently impressed him with that premise regarding the progressive development of the idea of God, and then have presented a historical Old Testament as being the accepted and current version, the Westerner finds little comfort in the reflection that the Hindu can scarcely be sensitive to conflicting and inadequate conceptions of God. Koran-readers are perhaps more likely to find within this work of composite authorship covering centuries of time, the various attributes of God at variance with each other - now ethical and beneficent, now low-motived, arbitrary and even sadly immoral, capable of unthinkable cruelties in those days described by a small American girl as being "before God became a Christian".

Another consideration clamors for attention. Can the thought-life of Jesus Christ himself be fully

appreciated without some knowledge of the genesis and growth of even his immortal sayings? "Blessed be the pure in heart, for they shall see God", he one day declared. A powerful statement this, both epoch-marking and epoch-making. The day of its utterance marks the end of a trail leading through the centuries while men were sloughing off externals to get at this kernel of thought. Herein I have quoted from a class lecture which finds illustration within this paper with its picture of patriarchs and prophets who, each in his own place on the trail, have waged the battle for purity. In India, too, one cannot but feel the pulsing current of such processes which shall one day emerge in the acceptance of ideals high and holy, yet scientific and practical, making for more synthesized living. Finally, the library of thirty-nine books known as the Old Testament, properly arranged and interpreted, as the true plinth upon which rests the New Testament library will give the life and teachings of Jesus Christ full authority and power.

An evaluation of the conception of God as it unfolded in Israel should prove both interesting and instructive even to the non-Christian. With this in mind, I have undertaken the subject by first explaining my method and reviewing the background furnished Old Testament thought and history by the older religions of the near East. I have then traced the pregnant and challenging idea of God from its crudest beginnings in Israel until it had won the

allegiance of such devout and thoughtful men as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

I wish here to express my appreciation of the guidance given me throughout the study by Professor Elmer A. Leslie, Ph.D., and for the encouraging interest of friends in America and in India to whom such a treatise seems timely.

S.E.R.

Muttra, India

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1. cf. Atkins, G.G.: Procession of the Gods, p. 264
2. cf. Ibid.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD

A. The Problem: Israel's Quest for God

1. The universal quest

The age-long struggle in human advancement has combined, in many races, high moral concepts with the God-consciousness. Perhaps it is not an over-statement that the search for the divine is common to every land and people. Springing out of purely naturalistic conceptions of deity and of the relations of deity to man, practical systems of religion have emerged, usually during the primitive period while life frankly depends upon the fertility of the soil. Consciousness of this dependence upon nature has further involved conceptions of relations between animate life and men. It followed naturally, that at the base of the social structure as it evolved, lay religious and political institutions so closely interacting that no distinction between them was apparent.

The universal quest for God may, for the purpose of this study, first be narrowed to the Oriental world where "an underlying identity of thought" must be recognized. Common fundamental ideas here constitute the common soil from which various cults have sprung. "It is clear," says S.A. Cook, "that this identity in the mental environment manifests itself unintermittently over the Oriental world from our earliest sources to the present day."[1] Traditions which were passed from father to son through countless generations have come to constitute a body of beliefs unconsciously propagated; and "every

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1. "Notes in the Old Canaanite Religion" The Expositor Aug. 1910 Vol. X, p. 113

positive religion has come into contact all along the line with the old ideas and practices which held the field."[1]

In particular, throughout Western Asia and Egypt, this underlying identity of thought is proven by Assyriologists and Egyptologists. "In the elaborate cults of Babylonia and Egypt, in the priestly and prophetical writings of the Old Testament, in the Talmudic and Syriac sources, and in modern Palestine itself, the common fundamental ideas appear in a great variety of shapes."[2]

2. The Israelitic quest unique

From among these popular representatives of ancient cults a certain people - for whom no great antiquity can be claimed - developed such genius as to lay hold upon those great religious ideas which, as C.F. Kent asserts, have become the mainspring of humanity's progress and which have determined the faith of more than half of mankind. "For, crystallizing, they became the religion of the Jew; being perverted, they degenerated into Mohammedanism; and, expanding, they developed into Christianity."[3] In this system developed by Israel the luminous central figure is the God of their fathers - of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob - the Hebrew Yahweh whose chosen people they believed themselves to be, in war and in peace, in triumph and in disaster, during the period of their most brilliant nationalism and finally, throughout the collapse of the state, through captivity and even martyrdom.

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1. Op. cit., p. 113
2. Ibid.
3. A History of the Hebrew people, p. 5

3. Its development a challenge to inquiry today

"Monotheism in any real sense is the result of a long, painful struggle," says Jordan, "and it has come to the world through what has been aptly called 'the Divine discipline of Israel.'"[1] In time Israel set herself apart from her neighbors by the content of her God-consciousness: He is a personal God; a social God; a moral God; a righteous God; a sovereign God - such, under stress of various circumstances, was her grasp of the various attributes of Yahweh. If this thesis is well founded on the evolving life of the nation from its nomad days to its highest culture, it should outline the first stages of the final panorama of a great world movement from God through humanity to God again, or,essential Christian thought.[2]

In a scientific age such inquiry is pertinent to faith. "With the rise of modern historical science", says H.P. Smith, "men began to realize that what the Biblical writers thought of God and divine things might not always be normative for us."[3] The modern student of history, no longer content with philosophical arrangements of conceptions of God, must needs trace the process of growth by which the very idea of God came to be what it is. For to him, the "principle of arrangement must be organic, according to the stages of

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1. Jordan, W.G.: "The Religion of Israel", A Commentary on the Bible by A.S. Peake, p. 82
2. cf. Bowne, B.P.: Studies in Christianity, p. 45
3. The Religion of Israel, An Historical Study, preface

growth discoverable in the documents upon which our knowledge depends."[1] A second consideration is that the legitimacy of fundamental beliefs in the God of the Old and New Testaments is frankly in the balance. For to the believer who undertakes this task the result must be either disillusionment or reassurance.

B. Method of Investigation

The search for the beginnings of Israel's religion involves an inquiry into her prehistoric times. For by the time she emerges into the full light of history with a body of literature, her distinctive idea of God is no longer a primitive or puerile conception but a well-established conviction, giving evidence of long and sturdy growth. Says Hermann Gunkel, "We shall see more and more what a long and undeniably great history mankind had already behind it before any such religion could possibly appear."[2] Whence came it first into Israel? Are any early traces of the idea to be found?

1. Sources. a. History yields its evidence.

Modern scholarship, in giving us a chronological arrangement of the literature of the Old Testament, has facilitated a reconstruction of Israel's thought life from the days of her patriarchs onward.

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1. Op. cit.
2. The History of Religion and Old Testament Criticism, p. 13

Says J.A. Bewer:

> "If we read the Old Testament in the order in which its various parts originated, it takes on a new significance, for the warmly pulsating life of the people and of its leaders is felt much better at its sources. The common folk with their songs and stories, the poets and the prophets, the historians, lawgivers, and sages, all stand before us as we follow in our imagination the various phases of the great development and try to think ourselves into the different experiences with sympathetic understanding until we feel the power that moved them all and recreate in our own mind the times of long ago, when the pioneers of the Spirit blazed new paths for the moral and spiritual development of the race." 1

Such a reconstruction is fundamental to the purpose of this paper.

b. Tradition makes its contribution.

If we seek to know the inner life of a people, we supplement their formal history, which is simply an accurate representation of acts with the preceding popular traditions and ritual, into which are projected the beliefs, the aspirations and the eternal truths held by the generations which received and cherished them.[2] Long before anybody thought of writing in literary form, the people sang songs, told stories and listened to the counsels of their wise men, repeating to their children that which appealed to them, of wit or wisdom. Riddles, hero-stories, paeans of victory, are flung off in rhyme or proclaimed in dignified measure,

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1. The Literature of the Old Testament in its Historical Development, preface
2. cf. Kent, C.F.: The Growth and Contents of the Old Testament, p. 3

to the accompaniment, often, of the clapping of hands or the staccato notes of simple musical instruments. Thus music and dramatic expression, however primitive, give thought its wings for wide ranges of flight and lasting hold upon imagination and memory. Such gems of thought wherever found - often in historical matter, - mark the real nucleus of the narrative, giving tradition-stories and songs a source-value all their own. Again, the unspoken ideas embodied in traditional ritual (are of) superior significance in any study of the world's religions.[1]

A sketch of Hebrew tribal and national history seems essential to a full understanding of her racial temper and her peculiar genius. "If it was granted this people to mount the heights, the path thither led along the ways of men".[2] Neighbored by Egypt at the height of her immemorial glory, by Babylonia, already declining after centuries of splendor and domination, and by Assyria of fabulous wealth, notorious for her brutally destructive conquests, the Israelites were a small people in a great world.[3] Of Semitic stock, her kindred nations included the Arabs, the Phoenicians, the Aramaeans, the Babylonians and Assyrians.[4] When first discovered, about 1500 B.C., the Israelites were nomads, living as had their

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1. cf. Smith, W. Robertson: The Religion of the Semites Intro. by S.A. Cook, p. 33
2. Noyes, Carleton: The Genius of Israel, Preface, p. 8
3. Ibid., p. 8
4. cf. Smith, W. Robertson: Op. cit., p.1

ancestors, in Arabian deserts or pasture lands, as the Bedouin lives today. Moving here and there, seeking pasturage for their flocks and herds on "that trail from savagery to civilization over which the Semites dragged themselves during weary centuries",[1] in time the Israelites fell into servitude to Egypt, for generations. After a signal deliverance from the hand of Pharoah (Merneptah, reign 1225-1215 B.C.) and another period of wandering in Arabia or with residence at Kadesh Barnea, they again reached Canaan. Here at last they settled down to agricultural pursuits, living in villages and cities, which they invaded either as fellow-citizens with the inhabitants or as conquerors, according to opportunity. A domination by their Philistine neighbors (1080-1028 B.C.) strengthened national aspirations to a monarchial form of government to succeed the former patriarchy. Accordingly, Saul was crowned (1028 B.C.) to be followed by David in 1013 B.C. Then, for one period only, did the Hebrew nation approach the sovereignty exercised by her great and ancient neighbors East and West:

> "David laid the foundations of a despotism. Solomon, worldy, ambitious, and loving splendor, strove with the resources which his father had made possible to play the role of magnificent potentate. When the government passed to a weak and unwise son, the momentum was lost, and the kingdom fell apart. Israel and Judah, divided against themselves, reverted to a humbler station." [2]

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1. Barton, G.A. : A Sketch of Semitic Origins, Preface
2. Noyes, Op. cit., p. 6

Under the patronage of Solomon, literary art had received a vital impetus; lyric poetry, historical and legalistic writings flourished. In an atmosphere of ease and plenty, the high sentiments of generations, as well as their records and laws, began to take permanent form, while on the other hand, "Israel's supreme gift to the world"[1] - that of prophecy - was brought forth by the great crises of her existence. Philistine wars of the eleventh century and the Syrian wars of the ninth century were illumined by the declarations made by the rank and file of the prophetic order.[2] The canonical prophets of the later day (eighth century to second B.C.) continue to meet every national crisis with a service at once patriotic and religious, recalling kings and people alike to put their trust in Yahweh, their deliverer of old; but in vain. The two little kingdoms, dwelling in that land of desire between the great imperialistic powers of the day, attempt to maintain national existence by resorting to foreign alliances, first with Assyria, then with Egypt. In time both kingdoms suffer conquest: Israel by Assyria (722 B.C.), Judah by Babylonia (597 B.C.). Of the first-named "Israel" we hear no more - her children are scattered and lost to the Hebrew race. In Babylon, on the other hand,

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1. Knudson, A.C.: The Beacon Lights of Prophecy, p. 1
2. Ibid., p. 2

the exiled "children of Judah" conserve their noblest patriotic and religious aspirations through the faithful labor of their prophets. Some sixty years later, Persian arms are victorious in Babylonia, and Cyrus the conqueror proclaims the end of the exile. Judah, henceforth known as "Israel", is now free to return and to rebuild her capital in Jerusalem.

From this survey, one towering fact emerges: "The genius of Israel was supremely a genius for religion";[1] her preeminent task was that of declaring the meaning of God in human experience. To Israel, he dominated history, intertwining event and ideal. Hebrew history, or the merest outline of it, affords a trellis-like support for the healthy growth of the great, compelling Idea which budded, blossomed, and bore rich fruitage alongside it.

In her literature, Israel's leaders have marked the progress of the Idea, stage by stage - a fact obscured until the modern discovery of the laws of progress, by the old Jewish tripartite division of the books of the Canon. Their logic demanding first law, then psalms, then prophets, must yield to Reuss's arrangement[2] whereby prophets, law, psalms - in a broad generalization - seems the incontrovertible order, as corresponding to natural processes of development. The search-light of historical science next discovers the separate sources, incidentally

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1. Noyes, Op. cit., Preface, p. 8
2. J. Wellhausen: Prolegomena to the History of Israel, p. 4. Quoted from Eduard Reuss L'Histoire Sainte et la Loi, Paris 1879 pp. 23-24

revealing a young nation struggling through its generations to throw off its slave-mind and to gain spiritual values, yet without a ponderous legal system, imposed from without. Instead the great prophetic ideals are formulated into statutes in the days of the nation's maturity.

In order to trace this development, the student must acknowledge indebtedness to scholars who have unearthed and identified those ancient and fragmentary sources. "All our knowledge of antiquity comes to us in fragments," says H.P. Smith, "a bit of flint ... a half-defaced inscription ... a pile of broken clay tablets ... even the literature which has come down to us is only a fragment."[1] The method of the archaeologist establishes the probable authenticity of the sources within the Old Testament and sets the originals apart from later additions and interpolations. It gathers up the ancient and broken inscriptions of stanza, of narrative, or prophecy or of legal document, rates them as (1) irrefutable information, as (2) documents not entirely free from ambiguity, yet valuable, as (3) indispensable hypotheses, or as (4) documents which belong to a period far remote from the events which they describe.[2]

Further, scientific research by disclosing the quaint originals which are found overlaid by

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1. Op. cit., p. 8
2. Cf. Kittel, Rudolph: The Scientific Study of the Old Testament, p. 2, 3

anachronistic interpolations and passages of interpretation reveals the literary methods of the times when authorship did not imply ownership, and historiographers were compilers or editors rather than original authors, selecting and modifying the writings of other men as best served their purpose in writing.[1] Even later changes are not precluded. Says H.P. Smith: "When a man of Israel had in his possession a book that seemed to him defective in its point of view, he saw no reason why he should not correct it by insertion of what he thought more adequate." Such interpolations, he adds, reveal most clearly and most touchingly the state of mind of religious men who felt the defects of the documents which had come down from antiquity.[2]

Finally, individual differences in diction and style of the authors of the Old Testament, and the times of their literary labors, were agreed upon by scholars. The sources were then ready for the modern student. Those needed for this paper may be tabulated as follows:[3]

Fragments of Old Testament Literature before 1000 B.C. [4]

Fragments from the times of David and Solomon [5]

Old Testament Literature of the Ninth Century B.C. [6]

Old Testament Literature of the Eighth Century to 750 B.C. [7]

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1. cf. Driver, S.R.: Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 4,5
2. Op. cit., p. 8
3. See Chapter III. p. 77 of this paper
4. See Chapter III. p. 77 of this paper
5. See Chapter IV. p. 153 of this paper
6. See Chapter IV. p. 162 of this paper

2. Method of treatment of sources

When scientific research had distinguished and set apart the earlier conception and the later thought in countless Biblical passages, both strands were made valid for use in maintaining the thesis that the ethical and spiritual religion of the Hebrews was won, point by point, by thinkers who pondered on the character of Yahweh.

Seven great documents and several lesser groups of annals treat the period under consideration, with varying interpretations of the movements of Yahweh in the history of his people. But the time-limit of literary production, up to 750, admits only the two earliest documents, J and E, and certain Chronicles and court histories, eliminating from this study the later documents - the combinations of J and E, and of J., E and D., the Deuteronomic narratives of Moses, and of Joshua, Judges and Samuel, the Deuteronomic editing and re-editing of the Book of Kings, and the Code of Holiness, all of which are dated after 700.[1]

In developing this theme, three methods present themselves:

(1) To treat conceptions subject-wise, following the history of each, as depicted in the sources of earlier and later date.

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1. cf. Leslie, E.A.: "The Chronology of the Old Testament", The Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 109 ff.

(2) To study the bits of tradition or history, song or story, code or covenant, and finally the literary documents, piecing together these evidences of the life and thinking of the people by a chronological principle.

(3) To recount specifically the work of J, and the modifications made by E, as evidence of the refinement of first recorded conceptions of Yahweh.

This paper attempts to establish its argument by combining the second and third methods.

3. Conceptions "Whether a book be authentic, in the technical meaning of the word, is of small interest compared with its authenticity as vision, as truth, and as the revelation of God."[1] "The conviction of a personal and living power, the utterance of a new life, which sprang from the infinite source of all life"[2] brought forth the true prophet and the conception whereby advancement was won.

"If we wish to understand religion in its innermost recesses, we must try to understand the inner life of good men," says Dr. Gunkel.[3] "The nature of man was that in which God was to make his crowning revelation," says Marcus Dods.[4] Jesus Christ, in his time, addressed his fellow-Jews as the product of Israel's long-

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1. Smith, G.A.: Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament, p. 217
2. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., Introduction by S.A. Cook, p. 34
3. Op. cit., p. 8
4. The Book of Genesis, The Expositor's Bible, p. 13

established yet ever-unfolding conviction of God. While polytheism had produced the cultured yet bewildered Athenians and Romans whom Paul addressed even later,[1] Jesus in Galilee made common cause with Jewish peasants and fishermen on hillside and lakeshore; even with these humble folk he could enter at once upon the loftiest themes of God's character, purposes and will for man showing the lofty ground of ethical monotheism upon which his hearers stood.[2,3]

Conceptions, or convictions, then, at every stage forged in the furnace of human personality, bear witness to revelation on the part of the divine and discovery on the part of man; thus God as truth illumines afresh the universe, the worth of men, and the seeker's own personal life and work. "From the divine standpoint revelation has been progressive; from the human, evolutionary."[4]

The sources, authentic as vision, truth and revelation of God, are therefore arranged as conceptions, doctrines or systems of thought, as follows:

1. Spirit worship, from totemism and theriomorphism to anthropomorphism, both physical and psychical, in deity; producing polytheism and polydemonism.

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1. Acts 17:22-31; Romans 1:18-25
2. cf. Fowler, H.T.: The Origin and Growth of the Hebrew Religion, p. 1,2
3. References: Matt. 5:43 and 6:34; Luke 4:11-27
4. Barton, G.A.: The Religion of Israel, p. 5

2. Monolatry, displacing polytheistic idolatry by exalting one god among the many; and its attendant ethical henotheism, or belief in one god not to exclusion of belief in others.

3. Monotheism, tending in Israel to dethrone all gods but Yahweh.

4. Early prophetism, rebuking the people's disloyalty to the ideal, first of henotheism, and later of monotheism.

Continuing the outline beyond the limits of this paper --

5. Later prophetism, more clearly defining ethical monotheism.

6. Legalism, institutionalizing ethical monotheism; law became "tutor".

7. Ethical and spiritual monotheism, being expounded by Christ.

To be sure, this modern view of progressive development in Israel as "a God-guided organic movement"[1] is simple in outline only. Deserting at one stroke (1) traditional primitive monotheism, (2) the frameworks of priestly construction which once systematized the origins of Israelitish theocracy,[2,3] and (3) the ancient belief that human life is "a cyclic and repetitious story of never-ending rise and fall",[4] the broad survey suggested must

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1. Jordan: Op. cit., p. 81
2. Eg. Gen. 9:1 ff; c. 17, 23. Nu. 33 Covenants in Gen. 9:12 f. Gen. 17:11, Ex. 31:13. Nu. 1-4, 10:11-28
3. Driver, S.R.: Op. cit., p. 126-128
4. Fosdick, H.E.: Christianity and Progress, p. 14

summarize the leading thoughts of centuries together. Further, each system gave way to its successor only gradually and never absolutely - such is the conservatism of the religious temperament and such the conflicting interplay of syncretistic elements. Being a matter of real life, the development suggested by the simple outline turns out to be exceedingly complex, with roots in the distant past, and with ramifications in all directions.

> "There are side currents as well as the main stream; higher and lower movements side by side; earlier types of thought reappear at later stages; alongside of the higher attainments there are survivals of primitive conceptions. We cannot hope - in fact we do not desire to reduce the rich complexity of life to an abstract simplicity." 1

4. Method of treatment of conceptions

Conceptions, traditional and historical, will be enriched by analogies of common beliefs in which Israel shared with her ancestors and her neighbors, whether Bedouin or Egyptian, Babylonian or Syrian. Her literature as it appears will authenticate Israel's growing conception of God from an animistic stage to one of pure monotheism. Contrasts and clashes with other faiths occur, rather than analogies.

(1) Under the heading of spirit worship, the animistic conception of deity is established in Israel by an "indispensable hypothesis". From the first worship of an indwelling vitality or soul recognized in all objects came a transition to the worship of certain "stocks and stones" embodying spirits or divinities. Next came iconic worship, with pictures and images to represent

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1. Jordan: Op. cit., p. 81

deities, naturally conforming to the human model. Follow deities conceived as having bodies and limbs as well as thought, emotion and will, in a full-fledged physical and psychical anthropomorphism. "Naturally their deities were thought to feel and act as the barbarous men and women of that early stage of development felt and acted",[1] says G.A. Barton. "They became more and more definitely human, and did not in the process become more divine",[2] comments F.B. Jevons. This cycle is perhaps best described as anthropomorphic polytheism. Its influence upon Israel will be shown in Chapters II and III.

(2) But "the tendency to provide the gods more and more definitely and precisely with human limbs and bodies ... when fully realized becomes intolerable".[3] The second great cycle of monolatrous worship and henotheistic belief is further distinguished by the rejection of the physical aspects of deity. It seems evident, however, that polytheism first gave way; and that they attributed physical features and physical limitations to Yahweh for generations.

In time, under the influence of Moses, Israel broke with polytheism. "Suddenly", says W.E. Addis, "a new and higher religion appeared upon the scene. Instead of a vague belief in spirits, the tribes ... adopted

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1. The Religion of Israel, p. 6
2. "Anthropomorphism", An Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, by Jas. Hastings, Vol.I. p. 573
3. Ibid., p. 547

the sole worship of a God who revealed himself as Jehovah and they made allegiance to him the bond of union among themselves."[1] All their religious sentiments and cultic acts were centered on him. Says I.J. Peritz:

> "Only a comparison with the religions of surrounding peoples can make clear how notable this faith is. There is no image of Jehovah; no sacred prostitution, which Baal worship had; there is an absence of the rank spiritism, animism and magic so prominent in the cults which later influence the Israelites; and in religious leadership the prophetic element, or the moral and spiritual, dominates over the priestly or ritual." 2

Chapter III is given to this intermediate stage between polytheism and monotheism which was the ideal of Mosaic times and of the centuries immediately following, during which the conflict with polytheism in Canaan brought about a syncretized worship of Yahweh and the local baals.

(3) The Beginnings of Monotheism

Meanwhile, among the Hebrews, devout followers of Yahweh were recalling the principles of Moses and denouncing the sensuous religions of Canaan. From first demanding a return to the one God who had brought them out of Egypt, Israel's sturdy pre-literary prophets continued to set forth Yahweh's trust-worthiness,[3] his justice and righteousness[4] and his supremacy,[5] tending to

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1. Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra, p. 53.
2. Old Testament History, p. 94 f.
3. Gad's rebuke for trusting in numbers rather than in God, 2 Sam.: 24
4. Nathan's reproof of David's sin, 2 Sam. 12: 1-15
   Elijah denounces Ahab's sin, 1 Ki. 21
5. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God" 1 Ki. 18:24-39

define an ethical monotheism.[1] Already "the genius of Israel, single, intense, consummately religious, came to superlative expression in the men who sought to know God, that they might do his will."[2] Together with this advance, the early writings of her literati encouraged racial and religious exclusiveness. Chapter IV. is given to this development.

Beyond the limits of this paper, Israel brought forth the literary prophets, who in turn found God in Yahweh, righteous, just but merciful, ready to punish but eager to pardon, exalted but tenderly loving, a mighty God but spiritual, God supreme and eternal. And the prophets led Israel to the heights[3] of ethical monotheism.

5. Outline Survey of Sources — "The history of religion was constructed on the basis of the sources, critically treated, and at the same time, the history of religion formed a basis for the reconstruction of the sources." 4

In this paper, the arrangement of sources is determined, first, by a chronological principle; second, by a class principle whereby writings of a class or type are set together for the logical treatment of the conception involved. Briefly stated, this survey includes:

a. Prior to 1000 B.C. - First impressions of deity as preserved by folk-lore and traditions: war and march

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1. "If Yahweh be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."
2. Noyes: Op. cit., p. 434
3. cf. Ibid.
4. Gunkel: Op. cit., p. 7

songs, proverbs and fables, prophetic blessings and oracles. Prevailing idea of God, anthropomorphic.

b. 1000-750 B.C. - Political, social and religious conflicts in Canaan give rise to two groups of writings:

(1) Poems, narratives and laws of the time of David, Solomon and Jeroboam I.

(2) Narratives of the dynasty of Omri. J and E documents, the Elijah-Elisha cycle of narrative. Prevailing idea: Henotheism in conflict with polytheism, both being anthropomorphic still.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF OLDER RELIGIONS

A. The Religious Heritage of the Orient

The universal quest for God has produced two types of thought to which the religious world is chiefly indebted: (1) the intuitive type, by which subjective thinking reached its climax in the Hebrew prophet, and (2) the rational type, by which Indo-European philosophers have, by abstract, objective thinking, analyzed the beliefs which actuate religious practices.[1] To the latter we owe the creeds and dogmas of religion. But by subjective thinking the Semites had first brought spiritual conceptions to bear upon human needs, and in time, as Hebrews, they "succeeded in making their ethical God so real ... that their ideas gripped the imagination even of untutored folk, and moulded character".[2] Their spiritual descendants, rich in religious feeling and assurance,[3] have attained modern ideas of universal humanity and the brotherhood of man.[4]

The Hebrews, then, developed the first positive religion; through the sheer force of their fresh and virile conceptions of God they were able to break through "the old unconscious religious tradition"[5] which had held successive generations in its benumbing grip from time immemorial. "They became the greatest social reformers of ancient history."[6] Yet, as suggested by W.R. Smith:

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1. Wild, Laura H.: The Evolution of the Hebrew People, p. 58 f
2. Ibid., p. 57 f
3. cf. Ibid., p. 59
4. cf. Ibid., p. 58
5. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 1
6. Wild, Laura H.: Op. cit., p. 57

> "No positive religion that has moved men has been able to start with a tabula rasa: ... A new scheme of faith can find a hearing only by appealing to religious instincts and susceptibilities that already exist in its audience. Thus to comprehend a system of positive religion thoroughly, to understand it in its historical origin and forms as well as in its abstract principles, we must know the traditional religion that preceded it." 1

Regarding this cleavage, S.R. Driver says:

> "The Hebrews were a Semitic people, and shared with their neighbors many similar laws, institutions, customs and beliefs: ... but religiously, there was a great gulf fixed, ... While in Babylonia, as elsewhere,[2] there were, no doubt, seekers after God, ... yet to the masses religion was polytheistic; the priests were often mere exorcisers, diviners, and soothsayers; magic, and a most superstitious use of oracles and omens, filled a great part in the religious life of the people; religious institutions and religious practices were not in Babylonia, as in Israel, made the vehicle and exponent of pure spiritual truths; there were no really spiritual teachers, such as the prophets were." 3

It is evident that later paganism had inherited a motley complex of rites and ceremonies from a series of ancestors in every stage of culture from pure savagery upwards.[4] An underlying 'identity of thought' throughout the Orient has been referred to.[5] What, then, were the general features which recur with striking uniformity in all parts of the Semitic field and govern the evolution of faith and worship down to a late date?[6] What, in other words, is the Hebrew debt to ancient religions?

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 2
2. Acts 17:27
3. Modern Research as Illustrating the Bible, p. 90
4. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 24
5. Page 13 of this paper.
6. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 15

In his study of the antecedents and fundamentals of religion, George Foot Moore finds a motive universal, supreme, perpetual, for creating and continuing religion, in the impulse of self-preservation.[1] Accidents, disease and perils make the savage aware that "besides his fellow men, besides the animals ... in short, besides the things he is familiar with ... there are around him other things that are outside his understanding as they are beyond his foresight and control".[2] In primitive psychology the category of cause and effect does not exist; equally foreign to thought is 'accident' - nothing merely happens; it is done purposely, by somebody or something, in a word, by 'powers' to which the savage necessarily attaches personality.[3] The summary of this initial, preanimistic step follows:

> "1. Man believes that there are powers, however conceived, upon whose behavior toward him his well-being is in manifold ways dependent.
>
> 2. He believes that these powers are actuated by motives like his own, and therefore comprehensible.
>
> 3. He believes that it is possible for men, in some way or other, to work upon the powers so as to keep them from doing harm or make them serve him. 4
>
> 4. And, finally, he acts on this belief."

With this order of development W.R. Smith agrees: "In early heathenism the really vital question is not what a

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1. cf. The Birth and Growth of Religion, p. 3 f
2. Op. cit., p. 3 f
3. cf. Ibid., p. 9 f
4. Ibid., p. 17

god has power to do, but whether I can get him to do it for me, and this depends upon the relation in which he stands to me."[1]

In an era when men have no idea of natural forces and laws, when, in short, nothing can be natural in our sense, and consequently, nothing supernatural, practical religion consists in getting possession of an occult force (the 'mana' of anthropology) and using it for one's own advantage. It is a morally indifferent force and can be employed for the malevolent purposes of the black art.[2]

Action, then, became an essential mark of early religion. To influence the powers, rites, offerings, prayers, were begun. "Ritual and practical usages were, strictly speaking, the sum-total of ancient religions."[3] Such forms as are significant in this thesis will be discussed under Religious Institutions.

Next came a period when the powers were imagined as 'spirits', ordinarily invisible but substantial and energetic beings which wandered freely about or lodged in men, or trees, or rocks; or they were termed 'souls', meaning an entity distinct from the body, its double; visible in dreams or in waking visions but ordinarily not seen.[4] Thus men, in their first adventures in psychology, conceived the soul as the real individual self of a man after death; therefore also in life, needing

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1. Op. cit., p. 83
2. cf. Moore: Op. cit., p. 12
3. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 20
4. Moore: Op. cit., p. 22-24

in both states care, food, drink, weapons, utensils, etc.[1]

"Between souls and spirits there is no difference in kind, and no boundary."[2] The souls of neglected dead become malignant spirits; men dreaded in life become more terrible after death, as evil spirits. On the other hand, ancestral spirits are peculiarly friendly to their own kin; the spirits of dead chiefs become clan gods.[3] Thus the powers gain in human character and become more completely personal - the anthropomorphic process has begun! "The local and functional powers now become individual personal spirits, each of which has its abode in a certain place or object, or is recognized by its specific activities"[4]; this is animism. Next appears the man who can induce 'possession' by a spirit which speaks and acts through him, but which he can control. This possessed individual then masters the traditional art of bringing on trance states, of driving evil spirits out of others by exorcism, of sending evil spirits into people to make them ill or mad - a common form of witchcraft.[5] By means of the fetish, men imprison a spirit within some small object, carrying it about to serve their purposes. Or they confine a guardian spirit for the village in a post of stone or wood, which later comers carve into an idol.

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1. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 22
2. Ibid., p. 27
3. Ibid., p. 27 f
4. Ibid., p. 28
5. cf. Ibid., p. 29-31

As for animals, "man ascribes to them his own feelings and motives; he recognizes in them an intelligence which ... is frequently more than a match for his own."[1] Animals are the embodiment of spirits or of souls; therefore man should get power over them by charms; he must allay their hostility and make them friendly. "When anything begins that has a semblance of worship, animals get their share of it."[2] Groups of human beings sometimes call themselves by the name of some animal, regarding themselves as related to the animals of that species; and so-called totemism of a later stage builds on this foundation.[3]

But of all the characteristics of this period there is none more intriguing, and none more persistent throughout all religious life, ancient and modern, than magic. Whereas in religion, affirms Dr. Moore, men persuade spirits or gods to give them their heart's desire, by magic men act, believing that their acts coerce the spirits to do what they want. Thus as higher religions develop, magic is sometimes symbolized in rites, while conversely, in purely religious acts which come to be regarded as infallibly effective, the element of persuasion may recede, as the rite relapses into magic.[4]

An early distinction was made between the 'white' magic of self protection, including, on the one

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1. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 36
2. Ibid., p. 37
3. cf. Ibid., p. 37 f
4. cf. Ibid., p. 41 f

side (1) aversive magic, by which demonic assaults were warded off, and (2) productive magic, to multiply the food supply; and on the other side, the black art of mischievous magic.[1] From the productive or fertility magic of nomad life, as from a root, sprang the sanctuary prostitution and the 'sacred marriage' of the cult, in later farm and city life.[2]

At length, "from among the horde of spirits, some rise above the rest and become what ... we may call gods"[3] - forces of nature, yet <u>persons</u> - capricious in their doings, and subject to negotiations by rite. During the next stage, men find the inherent efficacy of the rite less appealing than the benevolence of their kindly gods. By another long process the gods, as guardians of established customs, become responsible as political rulers, completely humanized.[4]

The evolution of natural polytheism may be outlined as follows:[5]

1. In the savage stage: Attention directed to powers, conceived as near at hand, for defense against evils, and for the multiplication of animals and plants that furnish food.

2. In the pastoral stage:

   a. Wandering nomads localize the powers more in stars, sky and sun. Certain stars and constellations are believed to bring rain; sky

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1. cf. <u>Op. cit.</u>, p. 59
2. cf. <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 61
3. <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 43
4. <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 50
5. cf. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 43-49

and sun either nourish vegetation or burn it up. The sky with its heavenly bodies, accompanying them everywhere, becomes their greatest god.

b. Nomads residing on oases conceive local proprietary powers as furnishing water and food for flocks, as protecting their clients from intruding clans, and prospering them on their forays. Becoming gods, they may accompany a favorite tribe to a new home. The religion of kinship, especially the worship of mother-goddess, then of father-god, appears. 1

3. In the agricultural stage: Beneficent gods bestow regularly fertile earth, seasonable rainfall, genial warmth of sun; or they withhold these gifts at times to keep alive man's sense of dependence. Religious rites attend every stage of farming. Permanent places of worship and of public festival are set up. The cultus of the kindly gods becomes established; the gods on their part enlarging their offices to include protection, championship and benefactions of all kinds to their worshipping communities.

4. In the city-state: New political organizations produce gods as divine rulers corresponding to earthly kings. Customs, common law, and codes of the people are considered as having divine origin; public religion becomes a function of state; the stage an organ of religion. The gods grow steadily greater with larger and more varied demands upon them, in peace and war.

In the process of becoming more human, the gods become moral, says Moore. As custodians of their people they eventually become "ideals of human perfection projected into the divine", at the same time taking their place in an organized human society.[2]

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1. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 52
2. cf. Op. cit., p. 49

"To the humanizing and civilizing of the gods two factors principally contribute: worship and myth."[1] In this paper worship includes the rites and ceremonies, prayers and offerings mentioned in the foregoing resume, to be treated later in this chapter. The subject of myth also requires a section apart, with examples. Both worship and myth in the inherited religions show no real progress beyond a certain point of attainment. The priests of oracle and cult could give the worshipers no fresh and creative ideas of deity and no creative religious experiences. Successive generations of the Semitic race grew up ... taking it as a matter of course that they should believe and act as their fathers had done before them.[2]

Thus lacking progressive idealism, a systematic hierarchy of Semitic deities was nevertheless constructed by Babylonian and Assyrian statesmen to serve political ends.[3]

On a day, certain Hebrew tribes, led by a man of genius, in escaping from bondage in Egypt, acknowledged as their deliverer a single deity and accepted him as their own, believing him to be unique among gods. On that day a new and positive religion was born. Says Noyes:

> "In place of the ancestral god of desert heritage, patron of his tribe from unremembered ancientness, the Hebrews at a definite instant accepted by voluntary act a single specific deity, revealed to them by name. Yahweh chose Israel to be his people; Israel acknowledged Yahweh to be its God." 4

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1. Moore: Op. cit., p. 50
2. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 2
3. See p. of this paper
4. Op. cit., p. 387

This new relationship between man and deity, being neither physical nor mechanical, held unheard-of possibilities of development. Founded on a great experience - a mighty act of deliverance - it evoked from the people so deep a gratitude and loyalty that there was no limit to the confidence they reposed in their God.[1] The task of making over their inherited crude ideas of deity while refining the conception of Yahweh as a spiritual being engaged Israel's best thought for centuries,[2] while they pondered two phases of their new faith:

1. Yahweh's character as it appeared different from that of other gods
2. The order of demand that he laid upon his worshipers.[3]

An idealism so fresh and vital involved a 'right-about-face' from the sacred past to the challenging vision of a righteous God whose power and whose purpose linked together past, present and future, giving a new perspective of hopes and standards for life. Yet in the end Israel did not break with her heredity; instead, she transformed the widespread and permanent features of Semitic religion, making religious institutions and religious practices 'the vehicle and exponent of pure spiritual truths'.[4]

Her leaders became able to separate the ethical motives of religion from their source in a merely

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1. cf. Knudson, A.C.: Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 122
2. cf. Noyes: Op. cit., p. 417
3. cf. Ibid., p. 420
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naturalistic conception of the godhead and its relations to men - thereby overcoming the fundamental weakness of heathenism.[1]

B. Tribal and National Religious Institutions

Our modern habit is to look at religions from the side of belief rather than of practice. ... But the antique religions had for the most part no creed; they consisted entirely of institutions and practices, hence, in studying the Semitic background of the Hebrew religion, we take up in order of their development the Religious Institutions, the National Deities, and finally the Mythology, variable and without binding force, which took the place of dogma.[2]

1. Clan Organization

First in importance, where social, political and religious interests are inextricably interwoven, is the simplest social group of family or clan. The first recognized type of permanent friendly relation between man and man was that of kinship,[3] and kinship embraced the human kinsfolk and fellow-citizens, the animals and the divinities of the circle into which a man was born. Further, in the animistic stage, brotherhoods, both natural and artificial, were formed on the basis of man's accepted kinship with the same totem animal or tree. Concerted devotion to their

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 58
2. cf. Ibid., p. 16 f
3. cf. Ibid., p. 29

common totem produced in time the totemistic clan complete.[1] Its members were bound by religious obligations to exogamy, marriage rules, brotherhood privileges and mutual protection.

The divinity of the clan was probably first conceived as a mother-goddess of productivity. With the recognition of fatherhood, the worship of father-gods began, sometimes to displace the earlier feminine deities, sometimes to assume partnerships with them. Thus in some instances, with the passing of woman's position as head of the home group and her name as that of the clan, passed the feminine deity and the institution of polyandry to give place to masculine deities, to polygamy, and patriarchal forms of government.[2] Again, in primitive Arabia the conditions of the country would produce two kinds of clans: the communal clan on the oasis, worshiping the mother-goddess; and the republican clan of caravan traders moving hither and yon, in their hazards learning to worship an ideal masculine character.[3]

Leaving the single clan, the next step in social and religious development grows out of the united interests of clans living side by side, especially when the pressure of practical necessity leads to organization for concerted action, as in war. The leading men of the several clans consult together; a single leader is chosen,

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1. cf. Barton, G.A.: A Sketch of Semitic Origins, p. 34
2. cf. Ibid., p. 2
3. cf. Ibid., p. 267

acquits himself well, and becomes a lifelong leader, not only of the army, but also in civil life, restraining the jealousies and feuds that threaten the solidity of the state.[1]

But feuds were incessant, often separating the small Semitic communities, with the result as given by W.R. Smith:

> "On the principle of solidarity between gods and their worshipers, the particularism characteristic of political society could not but reappear in the sphere of religion. In the same measure as the god of a clan or town had indisputable claim to the reverence and service of the community to which he belonged, he was necessarily an enemy to their enemies and a stranger to those to whom they were strangers." [2]

This exclusiveness finds its most pronounced expression in the share taken by the gods in the feuds and wars of their worshipers, so that practically none but outlaws changed their religion.[3] Thus David, driven from Yahweh's territory,[4] complains that he must go, serve other gods; Ruth, coming into Yahweh's domain, accepts the inference that she cannot retain her hereditary god of Moab. She declares to Naomi: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."[5] Jeremiah remarks that no nation changes its gods, although they be no (i.e. false) gods: "a nation's worship remains as constant as its political identity: ... a community[6]

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1. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 33 f
2. Ibid., p. 35
3. cf. Ibid., p. 36 f
4. I. Sam. 26:19
5. Ruth 1:14 ff
6. Jer. 2:11

could hardly change its religion at all without being absorbed into another stock or nation."[1]

Whenever the social and political unity of neighboring clans became an accomplished fact, religious fusion inevitably followed. Sometimes the two gods were fused into one; sometimes their individualities remained distinct, and they were worshiped side by side, as allied divinities. Illustrating the fusion of gods is the conception by Israel's masses which identified Yahweh with the various Baalim of Canaan,[2] while the latter is the kind of process to which we must apparently ascribe the development of a Semitic pantheon or polytheistic system.[3]

Within the clan-organization, therefore, the two leading conceptions of fatherhood and kingship in deity emerge - both, in Semitic life, being defined as physical relationships. The clan-belief that their descent was from the blood of the gods became a widespread feature in the old tribal religions of the Semites, too deeply interwoven with the whole system of faith and practice to be altogether thrown aside when the community of the same worship ceased to be purely one of kinship.[4]

2. Rites and ceremonies

The nature of the gods, or belief in them, was not that upon which antique religions were founded. Nor was it supposed that by believing in a

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit. p. 36 f
2. Judg. 10:10 f.;Hos. 2:8, 16, 17; 4-11, 12; Jer. 2:23, 26-28
3. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 38 f
4. cf. Ibid., p. 44

certain series of myths a man acquired merit or conciliated the favor of the gods.[1] Yet primitive man was not without beliefs, and upon two fundamental convictions he began to formulate his rites and ceremonies. Experience early inclined him to believe that he could gain or recover the favor of divine powers, and on the other hand, that he could avoid disaster and destruction by shunning certain things and places, wherein lodged a spirit which might resent intrusion. Whether magical ideas prevailed - "a multitude of things in the savage's world seem to be charged with an occult force, a kind of magical electric current"[2], either to be manipulated or to be shunned - or whether the predominating thought was that of propitiating or persuading spirits to aid and protect him; "what was obligatory and meritorious was the exact performance of certain sacred acts prescribed by religious tradition."[3]

> "In the course of time these grew into a considerable body of ritual, and as their efficacy depends on the exactness of the performance, the primitive custodian of the holy place is succeeded by a priesthood which preserves the tradition and sees that the rites are duly performed." 4

These priests became also the ministers of the oracle, interpreting the will and purpose of the gods respecting first the community, and later respecting individual inquirers.

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1. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 17
2. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 70
3. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 17
4. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 51

In general, then, Semitic rites were evidently prompted chiefly by a thought of co-operation with, or persuasion of, deity, or by fear of the gods. No exhaustive list of rites is here attempted, but significant for their influence upon Israel are the following:

a. In the co-operative group, where worship most nearly approaches communion:
   (1) Rites of divination by holy persons.
   (2) Fertility magic, developing the licentious cult.
   (3) Prayer, including both praise and petition.
   (4) Gifts, offerings, and sacrifices.

b. In the group where obedience was inspired by fear:
   (1) Circumcision.
   (2) Sacrifice of the first-born.
   (3) Tabu in general: the ascription of 'sacredness' to things.
   (4) Rites of expiation and placation addressed to the gods.

Rites of divination are discussed under the topic, "Office of holy persons".[1]

> "Fertility magic ... rests on the primitive assumption ('sympathy of nature') i.e. the identity of the reproductive processes in all nature, animal and vegetable. In consequence, it was believed that the germination of the seed and abundance of increase could be promoted by the exercise of the generative function by human beings, originally no doubt, by the cultivators in their own fields." [2]

At first independent of spirits or gods, this magic received religious sanction by attaching itself to any deity that was believed to give the increase to the husbandman's labors.[3] When at length agricultural festivities were carried into the sacred precincts of the town, town-dwellers joined in the rite and the licentious cult was

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1. See page 54 of this paper.
2. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 60
3. i.e., an astral divinity connected with the germinating season, or an earth goddess, Ibid.

organized.[1] In time "the Semitic view attributed civilization to the knowledge of sex, regarding both as blessings".[2] This idea suggested religious festivities in honor of the creator-divinities, and these occasions became orgies of sexual pleasure. In particular, as attested by Herodotus, Jeremiah (apocryphal), Ephraim the Syrian and Augustine, in the different Semitic countries, a religious importance attached to an act of free love on the part of a woman before she entered wedlock.[3] Inspired by the conception of the mother-goddess, the sacrifice of maidenly honor beside the altar as an act of worship long persisted to ensnare the worshipers, even of Yahweh.[4]

Concerning prayer and praise, both were used in early ritual as charms considered potent over the gods themselves.[5] The more personal relation between man and gods came with the development of petition, and such praise as would make the request more persuasive. Further, this prayer is the concomitant of offerings.

Gifts and offerings which men think acceptable to gods are brought with prayer to appease the anger of a god, or to gain his favor.[6] "The most primitive offerings were probably things to eat."[7] Variously considered as really the food of the gods, (as food for the spirits of

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1. cf. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 60 f
2. Barton, G.A.: A Sketch of Semitic Origins, p. 97
3. cf. Ibid., p. 44
4. See Hosea, 4:14
5. cf. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 53
6. cf. Ibid., p. 39
7. Ibid., p. 52

their dead ancestors was similarly provided) or as a gift which the giver might share, (eating the food himself while the god enjoyed the ascending sweet savor), the idea grew until the sacrifice of firstlings and of first-fruits became obligatory, as a tribute due to the powers which gave the increase.

By the single rite of circumcision man accomplished a double duty: that of personal sacrifice and of giving himself a mark whereby his god would always recognize him.

Sacrifice of the first-born to the gods evidently served either of two demands, on occasion: As being the most precious offering, the first-born son was sacrificed in order to escape the tragedy of failure in some building project, or to win high personal favor of the gods, perhaps reinstatement after committing some ceremonial error - 'missing the mark', the only recognized 'sin' of those times.[1]

Tabu, as giving rise to religious rites, is much discussed. "Fear of the gods expresses itself in the ascription to them of sacredness", says H.P. Smith, in explaining that since the gods belong to another sphere than that of men, they must be approached with certain precautions - things belonging to them must be handled cautiously - hence arose religious rites. "To ward off the baleful influence of one god we may put ourselves under the protection of another."[2]

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1. cf. Micah (ch.6;7) "Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
2. Op. cit., p. 35

With characteristic penetration, George Foot Moore strikes a deeper note, finding on the lowest planes of culture the belief in occult force, a kind of magical electric current with which the slightest contact, intentional or otherwise, and even too close proximity, suffices to draw the deadly discharge. "The animistic explanation is that a spirit lodged in these objects resents the act as a personal injury; and a step further on the object-spirit may be succeeded by a god to whom the object is sacred."[1,2] Next, all dealings with the 'marked' object become 'prohibited by custom or religion', on pain of 'contagion'. Should an offender invade the vaguely-defined domain of the gods or commit an act abhorrent to them, he involves himself, his family and his community in ruin. The community must in turn repudiate his deed and remove the 'contagion' by banishing him or by putting him to death.

> "Eventually whatever belongs peculiarly to gods or is regarded as peculiarly obnoxious to them is put under this sanction (of tabu). The old methods of physically removing contagion become an antidemonic disinfection, and finally rites of expiation and placation addressed to the gods. The idea of guilt originates in these notions." [3]

Or, as Kittel observes, in tabu we find the root ideas of 'clean' and 'unclean'.[4]

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1. Op. cit., p. 70
2. Thus Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:3) "dropped dead in his tracks, killed by a shock of 'holiness', which is the Hebrew name for this deadly fluid". Ibid.
3. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 71
4. The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 16

Finally, it must be admitted that several rites listed above were actuated by mingled emotions. Rites of divination, prayer, especially petition, and the offering of gifts and sacrifices were often inspired by fear. On the other hand, the general idea of tabu not only provided long discipline in obedience and reverence, through fear, but it also encouraged a sense of communion, or at least communication, with the gods, in highly appropriate places, with very specific decorum, and, in the case of certain rites, with results which transcend their physical causes.

The worship of trees prevailed; the ground under sacred trees was devoted to the building of altars; springs were consecrated, also high places or hills. In other words, beautiful and appropriate places were early reserved for worship, however crude.

> "The (sacrificial) food offered at the holy place or with religious rites is thereby brought into the sphere of 'holiness' and acquires divine virtues which are imparted to those who eat, giving health and strength and happiness. The sense of fellowship ... with the deity at whose abode they are gathered, so to speak as guests at his table, is a further consequence." 1

3. Altars and sanctuaries

"A regular and orderly worship requires a place where the worshiper is sure to find the god."[2] A meeting-place for god and man; "a stone set up to invite the deity to come and dwell in this conventional abode or beth-el at least long enough to partake

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1. Kittel, R.: The Religion of the People of Israel, p.16
2. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 50

of such liquid offerings as oil, water, blood, milk, honey and wine"[1] - perhaps the first altar was only a natural depression or a cup-mark in a rock-surface in some sacred spot.[2] Other rock-cuttings, whereby fluid offerings were conducted into a sacred cave beneath, also tell of worship by oblation. Certain Semitic and Greek temples were characterized by a dark inner chamber or 'holy of holies'.[3] Later, in the Canaanite period, "idolators bowed down to idols and images, pillars and asherahs, upon the hills and under every green tree".[4] Yet, throughout all stages from 'stock-and-stone worship' to the more aesthetic dedication of houses of worship, there is discernible the same attempt to realize, in a definite place, the presence of deity who shall minister to human needs.[5]

4. Office of holy persons — "In man's attempt to study the nature of the gods and to assign to their multitudinous activities and manifestations certain definite laws governing these activities, there was inevitably called into service from among the common ranks of men, a class of specialists who, because of their superior insight, became the recognized mediators between their fellow-men and the gods."[6]

Three classes of diviners were recognized:

a. Hartom or kahin. During the Canaanite period, oracular priests at the sanctuaries interpreted

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1. Wood, W.C.: "The Religion of Canaan", Journal of Biblical Literature, p. 10, Vol. XXXV; for Beth-el see Gen. 28:18 f.; 35:14 f.
2. Found on every hill; notably at Gezer, Mizpah, Gibeon, Zorah, Nebo, Bethel, Anathath and Gath.
3. Thus a cave under the Sacred Rock, site of Solomon 's Temple at Jerusalem, reached by very primitive rock-cuttings on the Sakhra leads some authorities to consider this a very ancient shrine.
4. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 22
5. cfMoore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 51
6. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 55

the phenomena of nature - of sky, of clouds, of springs and of trees. To them in time was entrusted the making of covenants.

b. Roeh (seer). "Mental and emotional states, regarded as caused by as many indwelling deities"[1], were interpreted by this prototype of the prophet of Gebal and of the Hebrew hozeh, seer, and nabi, prophet.

c. Hakam (sage). By closely observing human conduct this diviner was able to give the people his counsel in proverbs, thereby introducing the Wisdom Literature of the nations - at least in form. As a practical friend, the hakam became magician or medicine man, driving away threatening demons by the use of incantations and drugs.

C. National Deities

"Fundamental to all religious thinking is the conception of Deity."[2] "Among the Semites in general the tendency was to think of God in more distinctly personal terms than was the case among other peoples, and this was especially true of the Hebrews,"[3] says Knudson. Whence came the inherited conceptions of superhuman personality which gave grounds for comparison and contrast with Yahweh?

The office of the gods is best explained by

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1. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 55
2. Eiselen, F.C.: The Christian View of the Old Testament, p. 165
3. The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p. 50

the titles of honor with which men addressed them[1], as, for example, 'father-god', 'mother-goddess', and 'king-god'. Referred to under Clan-organization[2], these conceptions merit fuller discussion in the larger life of the nation.

"With strict literality ... a god was spoken of as father and his worshipers as his offspring."[3] This belief, which has points of contact with the lowest forms of savage religion, is expressed in a form too crude not to be very ancient in the Chaldean legend preserved by Berosus, in which animals as well as men are said to have been formed out of clay mingled with the blood of a decapitated deity.[4] Moreover, this religion of kinship had its beginning, doubtless, in the worship of a mother-goddess, for it was the mother's, not the father's blood which formed the original bond of kinship.[5] In a higher stage of social development the kindred god came to be revered as father. However, the mother-goddess persisted, as the wife of a father-god, or as the Babylonian Ishtar, in her oldest form unmarried, or rather choosing her temporary partners at will, the queen head and first-born of all gods. She reappears in Canaan and elsewhere as Astarte the wife of the supreme Baal. Or she might change her sex, as in Southern Arabia, where Ishtar is transformed into the masculine Athtar.[6]

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1. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 23
2. Page 44 ff. above
3. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 29
4. cf. Ibid., p. 43 Ref. Muller, Fr. Hist. Gr. II, 497 sq.
5. cf. Ibid., p. 52
6. cf. Ibid., p. 58

> "But not seldom religious tradition refused to move forward with the progress of society; the goddess retained her old character as a mother who was not a wife bound to fidelity to her husband, and at her sanctuary she protected, under the name of religion, the sexual license of savage society, or even demanded of the daughters of her worshipers a shameful sacrifice of their chastity, before they were permitted to bind themselves for the rest of their lives to that conjugal fidelity which their goddess despised." 1

Thus the pure and tender feelings elicited by worship of the woman as mother were offset by her appeal as woman, to their sensuality;[2] and the stage was set for the rites of the licentious cult - gradually degrading the normal, 'healthy animal' who was primitive man, into a creature obsessed by sex, even as civilizations advanced, flowered and fell into decadence.[3]

The worship of the father-god marks a distinct ethical advance in some particulars. His austerity suggested divine authority, awakening reverence and obedience; his protecting and nourishing care of his children aroused their confidence, loyalty and service. However, a paradox soon appeared within this paternal-divine authority. There could be no strict or rigid enforcement of it because supernatural sanctions alone are impotent; public opinion only could enforce the divine commands in this system. The results are obvious:

> "Outlawry (indeed) ... carries with it excommunication from religious communion, ... but in all minor matters, ... long-suffering tolerance ... is ascribed to the god; ... his anger can (scarcely) go beyond a

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 59
2. cf. Ibid.
3. cf. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 61
4. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 59

> temporary estrangement, which is readily terminated by their repentance, or even by a mere change of humour on the part of the god, when his permanent affection for his own gets the better of his momentary displeasure. ... On the whole, men live on very easy terms with their tribal god, and his paternal authority is neither strict nor exacting. This is a very characteristic feature of heathen religion, and one which does not disappear when the god of the community comes to be thought of as king rather than as father." 1

In early monarchies the sacerdotal character of the king who, as religious and civil head, became priest on occasion, suggested the analogy of divine kingship - hence the rise of the god as king.[2] The limit of executive strength, notable in human kingship in its rudimentary state, was no inconsistent weakness to the Semite - rather it was in keeping with his nature, impatient of control as he was, and having no desire to be strictly governed either by human or by divine authority.[3]

> "What the Semitic communities asked, and believed themselves to receive, from their god as king lay mainly in three things: help against their enemies, counsel by oracles or soothsayers in matters of national difficulty, and a sentence of justice when a case was too hard for human decision." 4

Accordingly, in the various stages of national organization which the northern Semitic states reached before being crushed by Assyria the supreme deity was habitually thought of as king.[5]

Lesser gods took their places in the

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 60 f
2. cf. Moore, G.F.: Op. cit., p. 79
3. cf. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 64
4. Ibid., p. 64
5. cf. Ibid., p. 66

pantheon which developed wherever several tribes, each having its deities, were welded together into one nation. "The society and kinship of many gods were formed on the model of the alliance or fusion of their respective worshipers," asserts W.R. Smith, who finds that the chief part in the development of a systematic hierarchy of Semitic deities is due to Babylonian and Assyrian statesmen and priests, who labored together to build up a consolidated empire out of a multitude of independent communities and a multiplicity of local worships.[1] Significant, in contact with Israel, were such religious developments in Babylon, Canaan, and Egypt.

1. The Babylonian Pantheon

"The Babylonian conception of Deity shows more striking similarities to the ideas of the Old Testament than do the conceptions of other nations"[2], observes Eiselen. The earliest Babylonian inscriptions tell of local patron deities, of whom the chief were Marduk of Babylon, Enlil of Nippur, Sin of Ur, Ashur of Asshur, Shamash of Sippara, and Nergal of Cuthah. Associated with the patron deities, which were worshiped in every center of habitation, were a personified and deified sun and moon and many lesser natural forces and objects. As the phenomena of nature gained increasing attention and theological speculation advanced, the number of gods in the Babylonian pantheon multiplied for centuries, but later

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 39
2. Op. cit., p. 167

thought confined the worship chiefly to Marduk, Nabu, Sin, Shamash and Ishtar.

Monotheistic tendencies are, in fact, not absent. A tablet of the Neo-Babylonian period states that Marduk is called Ninib as the possessor of power, Nergal as lord of battle, Bel as possessor of dominion, Nabu as lord of business, Sin as the illuminator of the night, Shamash as the lord of right, Addu, as the lord of rain, etc. Yet the fact that "polytheism, gross polytheism, remained for three thousand years the Babylonian state religion"[1] proves, as Eiselen says, that monotheistic tendencies never go beyong the realm of speculation.[2] To conceive of one god alone whose very existence makes logically impossible the existence of any other deity is to transcend the spiritual grasp of the Babylonian mind.[3]

2. The Canaanite Pantheon

The Pantheon in Canaan comprised her nature-gods, represented by the baalim; gods of the inner consciousness, who revealed themselves through the various human emotions; gods of the events of life, who owned men and exercised authority over them; and spirits of the dead, represented by ghosts and shades.

a. Nature deities. "The gods of nature were conceived as those powers which inhabited all the physical objects which in any way exhibited mysterious phenomena."[4]

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1. Smith, W.R.: Op. cit., p. 168, quoting Freidrich Delitzsch: Babel and Bible, p. 65
2. cf. Ibid., p. 167
3. cf. Rogers, R.W.: The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, p. 88
4. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 21

Sacred waters, sacred trees and sacred mountains and hills were peopled by deities or spirits, as proprietors or mistresses, all but visible. Underneath the bubbling spring, behind the budding leaves and fruit, shrouded within the rain-cloud on the hill-crest, was life, vigorous and stirring, betokening beneficent thought for mankind. This conception was common to the Semitic world:

> "Ancient Arabs were accustomed to attribute personality to holy trees and expect them to speak with audible voice. The prototype for every ideal Semitic sanctuary was the mythical garden of the gods in which were all kinds of holy trees, 1 regarded as the planting of the deity. 2 Trees appear to have stood in all the Canaanite high places." 3,4

There were baals of the sky: namely, of the north, of the sun, of the moon, of light, of darkness, etc. There were baals of atmospheric phenomena, assigned to storm, to heat, cold and dew; but most awe-inspiring of all was the mountain-baal from which the storm-baal may have emerged.[5] Such evolution from fetish-numen to sky-god is illustrated by the ancient god Addu, or Adad, or Hadad, who held sway, first as a god of the soil, controlling its fertility and its water-supply, until in time he took his seat on Mount Lebanon, there to exercise proprietorship over the famous cedars of the region. As probably worshiped by the early Amorites, he was the weather-god,

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1. cf. Ezek. 31:8,9
2. cf. Is. 61:3
3. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 21
4. Ref: Deut. 12:2; 2 Ki. 16:4; 17:10; 2 Ch. 28:4 Jer. 2:20; 3:6; 17:2; Ezek. 6:13
5. cf. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 27

controlling wind and storm; the thunder was his voice, the lightning his sword. From this conception of his power it is but a step to the war-god who, like the Egyptian War-Baal, became extremely conscious of his might; he is described as valiant, irresistible, roaring in heaven, traversing the mountains, consuming the enemy with flame, and spreading terror in the countries where the Bedouin tremble and prostrate themselves in fearful worship.

b. Gods of the Inner Consciousness.

On this theory the gods entered into men, revealing themselves through various human emotions, as anger, fear, love, joy and peace. The logical result was that these emotions became deified, and personal responsibility for conduct, little sensed at best by the masses, was further stifled by their conceptions of the deity which sometimes 'possessed' them.

So far from being entirely passive, however, the people were prone to induce and prolong desirable emotions. "The activity of these embodied gods could for special manifestations be enhanced by participation in certain rites or even by sleeping."[1] A like purpose was served by eating the flesh or drinking the blood of some holy animal.

Passive receptivity had its place. "Dream states produced by an indwelling deity were sought and were eagerly interpreted with ominous significance."[2]

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1. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 81
2. Ibid.

Especially did the deity reveal his will to one sleeping near holy places, as did Jacob at Bethel[1] and Solomon at Gibeon.[2]

Belief in these gods who manifest themselves in the psychic state of man doubtless produced the prophet of the times. Says Wood:

> "For the sake of correctly interpreting states of consciousness there originated the order of the nebi'im, 'prophets'. ... The prophets, in extreme cases, sought to suppress the normal and to enhance the abnormal states of consciousness by going through all sorts of bodily movements as do the modern dervishes. In this frenzied state they believed themselves to be possessed by some divine personality who could in this way best impart a revelation. Prophets of this kind existed at Gebel in 1118 B.C. and were numerous in the days of Samuel and Elijah." [3]

c. Gods of the Events of Life.

Presiding over all the departments of life, both tribal and individual, and exercising their authority over men, whom they claimed as their own, were these beneficent gods. Unlike the nature-deities, who were sometimes hostile and difficult to approach, these 'departmental deities' were kindly, friendly, righteous, and active in man's behalf: "one god or another ... dwells, creates, knows, helps, fills, saves, hears, and gives peace and favor."[4] Their ways and their will as related to life's events were interpreted, not by prophets, but by 'wise men'.

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1. Gen. 28: 12-19
2. I Ki. 3: 5-15
3. Op. cit., p. 82
4. Ibid., p. 83

Chief among these beneficent deities, who were looked upon as the direct physical ancestors of the people, and eager to confer blessings upon children named for them, were the following:

Amm, 'father-uncle': a title dating from a time in polyandrous society when a child could not distinguish his own father in a group of his mother's husbands. The conception of human relationship to the gods gave greatest prominence to Amm. 1

Dad, (Hebrew 'dod'): essentially the same original meaning as Amm. 2

Ab, Abu, 'father': divine title originating in the polygamous stage of social development, when the child first recognized his father. Ab was a tribal deity. 3

Melek, 'king', and Milkah, 'queen': titles of sovereignty, were probably carried over from the tribal head to the divine counterpart. Malik (Babylonian) was 'counsellor'; inferior to king. Melek, corrupted to Molek, was worshiped during the next period. 4

Ashtart, primitive Semitic 'mother goddess', had a long and eventful reign. "Carried by the early Semites from their Arabian home to every country whither they went, this famous goddess won a unique and well-defined reputation, though with local colorings, in every country settled by her worshipers. In Babylonia known as Ishtar, 'Bride of the king of heaven', 'mistress of luxury and splendor'; in Assyria known as Astartu, in Canaan as Ashirat, Ashtart, Asherah, Attar, or Atar; in slightly varying aspects goddess of maternity, fertility, sexual love and war." 5 6

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1. cf. Ammiel, 2 Sam. 9:4; Ammi-nadab, Ex. 6:23; Ammi-shadday, Num. 1:12
2. cf. Ashdod, Josh. 11:22
3. cf. Abram, Gen. 11:26; Abraham, Gen. 17:5; Abiram, Num. 16:1, Abigail, 1 Sam. 25:14; Ahab, 1 Ki. 16:28
4. cf. Abimelek, Gen. 20:2
5. cf. Asherah, 1 Ki. 15:13; 2 Ki. 17:6; Asherim, symbol of goddess Asherah, 1 Ki. 14:23; Mic. 5:14
6. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 91 ff.

> Adon, Adonis, (Greek) or Tammuz, (Babylonian); a beautiful young shepherd, lover of Ashtart, slain by a boar. Associated with sacred trees, Tammuz probably came to be identified with the life of spring vegetation which, because of the torrid heat of summer, withered and died. This annual dying of vegetation announced the death of the god, whose funeral feast was celebrated ... by the wailing of men and women." [1]

d. Spirits of the dead.

"Animism leads to the worship of the spirits of the dead, especially of dead ancestors," [2] says Edward Pace. The teraphim were images of ancestors, and were used as household gods. "The family festival is connected with the worship of the common ancestor." [3] Another claimant for recognition after death was the murdered man: his spirit might be propitiated by offerings as indicated by the archaic survivals in Numbers 19 and in Deuteronomy 21:1-9. The practice of exalting the kings of Assyria to the rank of gods after death is noted by H.W.Robinson, [4] as also, among all Semites, their thought of honoring certain humbler men for merit. Innumerable saints and demi-gods, who first existed as men, and were raised to the dignity of gods or supernal beings after death, were recognized and their graves regarded as sanctuaries.

No separation of the wicked from the righteous was thought of, in the realm of the dead. [5]

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1. Wood, Op. cit., p. 94
2. Ideas of God in Israel, p. 76
3. Ibid.
4. cf. Op. cit., p. 81 f.
5. Ref.: I Sam. 28:19; Gen. 37:35; Job 3:13-19; Isa. 14:9; Ezek. 31:18

"However", says Wood, "some shades suffered more discomfort than others; but this was not apportioned according to a law of rewards and punishments depending upon the earthly existence but was conditioned on the proper or improper funeral or burial rites."[1]

D. Sources in Ancient Literature

1. Egyptian Babylonian and Assyrian

"The three great civilizations which preceded the Israelitish were those of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, and the Hittites," says Barton.[2] The latter, a 'forgotten empire'[3] only recently being disinterred reveals a code of laws and religious customs,[4] but Hittite translations, largely tentative as yet, reveal such differences in customs and regulations as to prove the nation independent of Israel.[5] On the other hand, researches within Egyptian and Assyrian civilization disclose the 'material foundation'[6] upon which the religions of the Semitic peoples were built, and from which the religion of Israel rose immeasurably above the others. Modern Egyptologists and Assyriologists are thus becoming Biblical scientists.[7]

a. Myths include many themes in which these older and polytheistic nations show conceptions of deity which contrast strongly with the exalted monotheism of the

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1. Op. cit., p. 133. See also Is. 14:19; Ezek. 31:16
2. Archaeology and the Bible, Intro. p. 13
3. Ibid., p. 72
4. cf. Archaeology and the Bible, p. 369 ff.
5. For Hittites in contact with Israel, see Gen. 23:10; 26:34; II Sam. 11:3
6. Driver, S.R.: Modern Research as Illustrating the Bible, p. 90
7. Gunkel, H.: Op. cit., p. 13

Bible, from Genesis onward. Only a few can be cited.

(1) Indicative of the common belief in the creation of the world by deities, and of the deluge, the account at Nippur, written before 2000 B.C. relates:

"After Anu, Enlil, Enki and Ninkharsag
The black-headed race had created,
All that is from the earth, from the earth
they caused to spring;
Cattle and beasts of the field . . .
. . . . . .
In clean places . . . cities . . . he founded
Their cities were named, they were allotted
to guardian spirits (?)"

The gods determined to send a flood. "Ziugiddu in consequence constructed an idol from wood and earnestly worshiped it, seeking oracles for his guidance."[1]

They came:

"O reed-hut hearken; O wall, give heed!
O man of Shuruppak, Son of Ubartutu,
Pull down thy house, build a ship. . .
. . . . . .

Seven days and seven nights
The deluge swept over the land, wind
made the huge boat tremble." 2

Similarly, two accounts preserved at Nineveh by King Ashurbanipal in the seventh century B.C. give evidence of antedating the Hebrew version:

"The gods were frightened at the deluge.
They fled, they climbed to the highest heaven,
The gods crouched like dogs, they lay down by
the walls.
Ishtar cried like a woman in travail;
Wailed the queen of the gods with her beautiful
voice,
'Those creatures are turned to clay

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1. See also Isa. 40:20
2. Barton, G.A.: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 306

Since I commanded evil in the assembly of the gods.
....
I alone bore my people
Like spawn of fishes they fill the sea.'"

When land reappeared, a dove, a swallow and a raven were sent out; the latter did not return. Then Utnapishtim, master of the ship, disembarked all...

"I appointed a sacrifice on the top of the mountain peak;
The gods smelled the sweet savor
The gods above the sacrificer collected like flies."

Enlil had sent the deluge, and when he saw the ship, he was angry.

"His heart was filled against the gods and the Igigi.
'Who then has come out alive?
No man must escape from destruction. ...'
Ea opened his mouth and spoke. . .
'On the sinner let his sin rest . . .
I have not divulged the decisions of the great gods.'" [1]

Another Babylonian version from this library explains that men had sinned, and had suffered as punishment, famine and pestilence, but their reforms were shortlived ..... As a last resort, the flood was sent.[2]

(2) The fall of man in the Adapa Myth of Babylon[3] (date unknown)[4] gives the same general ideas found in Genesis, that knowledge carried with it a power hitherto regarded as an attribute of divinity, but did not carry with it immortality. This could be obtained by eating a certain kind of food. Under temptation Adapa, like

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1. Barton, G.A.: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 301
2. Ibid., p. 303
3. Ibid., p. 283 ff.
4. Because "an increasing number of modern scholars regard the Babylonian story as an earlier form of a narrative which the Hebrew writers took and purified" (Ibid p. 284) it is included here.

Adam, falls. His guardian deities work at cross-purposes. By a falsehood Ea had warned him not to partake of the 'bread of life' and 'water of life' offered by Anu, the supreme God. Anu's decree follows:

> "'Now thou shalt not live; men are mortal (?)'
> Sickness he placed in the bodies of people. ."

yet he provides Adapa with clothing.

(3) The origin of a city and the beginning of agriculture in Babylon is localized in a mountain of ideal beauty and holiness, whose animals, wolf and lamb, dog and kid, live pleasantly together. The only inhabitants are a god and a goddess whose marital union causes waters to irrigate the land, producing vegetation. Then their guardian deities, Enlil and Ninkharsag, bring forth human helpers, to whom Ninkharsag jealously denies immortality. However, the men are appointed lords of vegetation and of medicinal plants, their spouses to become house-mistresses.[2]

(4) Sheol, 'land of no return', wherein the deeds of the dead are weighed, yields up its secrets in the poem entitled "Ishtar's Descent to the Underworld"[3]. Going down in search of her beloved Tammuz who has died, Ishtar is shorn of all her royal insignia and ornaments, is closely confined in the palace of justice and cursed with sixty diseases. However, for her as goddess of love, the edict of 'No return' is finally revoked because all propagation

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1. See also Gen. 3:14-24
2. cf Barton, G.A.: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 309 ff.
3. Ibid., p. 487 ff.

of life had ceased with her departure. At length, Ishtar is sprinkled with 'water of life' and brought forth to earth again.

> "The conception of a place under the world whither the dead go is an obvious development from the visible grave where the dead man's body is put away - (a place whence none returned). Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks and Romans furnished with doors the dwelling-places of their dead." [1]

The doors and bars of Sheol are mentioned in Old Testament literature.[2] So, too, the thought persists that justice is meted out in Sheol. Says Isaiah: "Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol".[3] Ezekiel sees the uncircumcized great and powerful of earth who caused terror in life, bearing their shame to the pit.[4] "Sheol is naked before God", affirms Job.[5] Hannah, praying for a son, addresses her God of knowledge by whom actions are weighed:

> "Yea, the barren hath borne seven.
> Yahweh killeth, and maketh alive;
> He bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up."[6]

b. Social and Religious Ideals.

(1) The Babylonian Sabbath, on every seventh day, was a feast day for Marduk and Zarpanit, and an evil day for men, with prohibitions for certain classes; the shepherd could not put on a clean garment, nor offer sacrifice; the king should not ride in a chariot; the seer should not secretly utter an oracle; the physician should

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1. Driver, G.R.: "The Psalms in the Light of Babylonian Research", The Psalmists, p. 147
2. Job 7:9; 17:16
3. Isa. 14:9-11
4. Ezek. 32: 22-31
5. Job 26:6
6. I Sam. 2: 5,6

not lay his hand on the sick![1]

(2) Prophesies of Egyptian priests include one written before 2900 B.C. which predicted an invasion of Egypt by foreigners, and a great deliverer:

"To refresh themselves
This land shall be plundered . . . .
The land is going to destruction, as (?) is
appointed for it
. . . . . .

The poor shall collect possessions
And the great will be brought to nought.
A king shall come from the south by the name of Ameni.
He shall be born from a woman of Nubia;
He will be born in the city of Nechen;
He will seize the crown of Upper Egypt
And set the crown of Lower Egypt on his head.
. . . . . .

The people will rejoice in the time of the son of man;
His name shall endure for all eternity....." [2]

A prophetic vision is related by King Ashurbanipal of Assyria (668-628 B.C.). After sacrificing to Ishtar, he prays for victory over the king of Elam. Then, through a seer, Ishtar reveals herself, bearing a bow and quiver and brandishing a heavy sword. She admonishes Ashurbanipal to "eat food, drink wine, appoint rejoicing, exalt my divinity until I go and accomplish this undertaking." She promises protection for his body, face and feet. Before her a fire is blown to capture his foes.[3]

(3) A social conscience in Egypt finds expression in the "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant"[4], written before 1800 B.C. Being robbed and beaten by another peasant, the hero

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1. cf. Barton, G.A.: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 281
2. Ibid., p. 479 f.
3. cf. Ibid., p. 482
4. cf. Isa. 1:17, 23; 10:2; Jer. 7:6; Deut. 10:18; 14:29

appealed for justice so nobly that he was finally brought before the king, who avenged him. In his nine addresses certain admonitions suggest parallels in the Old Testament. Says the peasant to the first officer who heard his appeal: "Thou are the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow"[1]; to the eighth officer: "Do the truth for the sake of the lord of truth. ... Thou virtuous one, thou shouldest be really virtuous." Further, "truth is true to eternity". Then, quoting the sun-god: "Speak the truth; do the truth; for it is great, it is mighty, it is everlasting", he questions: "For does the scale stand aslant? ... In just scales there is no wanting."[2]

(4) An ideal king. The admonitions of Ipuwer, an Egyptian sage, grow out of a disorganized condition existing in Egypt prior to 2000 B.C. He longs for a powerful and benevolent king who might retrieve the ruin.[3] Whether deploring the departure of the god Re, or expecting some gracious god to arise as king, he muses:

> "He bringeth coolness upon that which is hot. It is said, he is the herdsman of mankind. No evil is in his heart. Would that he had perceived their nature in the first generation of men; then would he have repressed evils; ... he would have destroyed their seed and their inheritance. Where is he today? Is he sleeping? Behold, his might is not seen." 4

The relationship of the king to deity, in current opinion of the time is summarized by Cook as follows:

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1. cf. II. Sam. 7:28; Ps. 15:2, 51:6
2. Barton, G.A.: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 486 f.
3. See also Is. 32:1; 40:9-11
4. Barton, G.A.: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 486 f.

> "The belief that the king was son and viceroy of the deities was all-pervading. It leaves its mark in many shapes, in many ages; in the prayers and the praises, in myth and in history. It appears in the prologue to Hammurabi's code of laws; in the priest-kings and lieutenants of Assyria; it underlies some of the Old Testament ideas of the real and the ideal king; and the Syrian father Aphraates employs it to support his argument that Christ was the son of God. ... It leaves its traces in the insignia, ... court etiquette, royal prerogatives, in the tithe and tribute, and in the relation between temple and palace. In fact, the divine king is part of the 'system' which united the deities, the land and the people. The deity was king; other nations were the kingdoms of other gods; the king was the deity incarnate, and both stood in the closest relationship to the people." 1

E. Religious Practice in Canaan

It is evident that the religion of Canaan cannot be reconstructed either from the crudest rudimentary conceptions of deity, or, on the other hand, as an abstract faith far above the social life of the people. It was, as Cook asserts, a highly developed system, combining elements of Amorite, Babylonian, Egyptian and other cultures, yet still animistic and materialistic.[2] Yet, as Kittel maintains, there was a spiritual upper stratum among the Canaanites which was strongly inclined to the el-faith of the early Israelites; indeed they looked upon their god not only as highest in contrast with all others, but also as the higher unity embracing all the individual gods,[3] a conception that was tending toward an ethical henotheism in the few who shared it.

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1. Op. cit., p. 117 f.
2. cf. Ibid., p. 114
3. cf. Kittel, R.: The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 47

The social implications of Canaanite religious and political institutions had, indeed, brought about a practical religion which had ethical elements, however rudimentary and narrow. Says Robertson Smith: "The reciprocal relations of men and gods were well understood"[1]. This is further explained by Cook as follows:

> "There was no distinction between offences against the community or its deity. ... The essense of the system lay in the recognition of common interests and mutual social obligations, ... The whole teaching of anthropology warns us not to look only upon the dark side of Canaanite religion. Nor must we form too low an estimate of nature-deities. If men looked to them for the increase of the soil, they were no mere gods of clouds or flocks; their loyal adherents appealed to them in all human crises and troubles, in all matters where their joint welfare was concerned." [2]

Unselfishness within the group, then, with a different standard for those outside it, characterized this early practical religious system, constituting at onces its possibility of moral development and a certain positive check on that development. Says Robertson Smith: "Its fundamental weakness was its inability to separate the ethical motives of religion from their source in a merely naturalistic conception of the Godhead and its relation to man."[3]

But does the survey of pre-Israelitic Canaan disclose a single supremely powerful god who might become a rival of Yahweh? The exaltation of a nature-deity by

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1. Quoted by Cook, S.A.: Op. cit., p. 112
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

successive stages to the status of a war-god has been noted.[1] Moreover, a period of Egyptian supremacy in Canaan had established the recognition of Amon-Re, the 'great god' and of the king of Egypt, the 'good god', sun and champion of the supreme Sun-god whom he incarnated as visible god, the source of the kingdom's wealth and prosperity. He was also the guardian of the cultus, and the gods were his gods. Thus to both king and gods the chieftains look for assistance, as the Tel-el-Amarna letters testify. "They acknowledge that the king of Egypt is the god, the Sun, the child of the Sun, the Sun in heaven, the everlasting Sun, whom the Sun loves.[2] ... A Canaanite chief writes that the king is like the Sun which rises over the lands every day. ... The captives pray for the king's breath or spirit, the Canaanites affirm in their letters that his breath gives them life, it soothes their heart, they rejoice when it reaches them, for without it they cannot live."[3]

From the structure of the system, then, it follows naturally that loyalty to the king and to the gods was identical, the Canaanite word for sin (hitu) denoting either a political or a religious offense. Even after Canaan was lost to Egyptian rule,[4] for centuries Egyptian influence continued to color religious thought among the Canaanites.

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1. Addu, Adad, or Hadad, p. 57 of this paper
2. These titles recur from Syria to Lachish in the South
3. Cook, S.A.: Op. cit., p. 116
4. Under Rameses III. 1198-1167 B.C.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD IN ISRAEL TO 1000 B.C.

A. Sources in Israel's Own Literature

1. War and march songs

Judging from the rare early bits of Old Testament verse which furnish contemporaneous evidence of Israel's conceptions of Yahweh her God, the preponderating thought was that of his great power, and his arbitrary use of it to favor his chosen people and to baffle his enemies.

a. The Song of Miriam[1], after the crossing of the Red Sea, is accounted to be the earliest bit of contemporaneous verse voicing national religious conviction:

> Leader: "Sing to Yahweh for highly exalted is he;
> People: The horse and his rider he has hurled into the sea."

"It was in just such manner," says Bewer, "that the ancient Arabs also celebrated their victories. With music and dancing the women, led by Miriam, repeated ever again the exciting refrain ... It consisted only of these lines."[2] Peritz also notes "the recitative repetition accompanied by dance, and continuing in Oriental fashion for hours, until enthusiasm ends in the exhaustion of the leader and chorus."[3] The expansion of these two lines into the Song of Moses[4] is usually considered the work of a later poet, "after they had got a firm footing in Palestine", as[5] "belonging to the monarchy", or[6] "little if at all, before the

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1. Ex. 15:21
2. Op. cit., p. 2
3. Op. cit., p. 79
4. Ex. 15:1-18
5. Sellin, E.: Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 35
6. McFadyen, J.E.: Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 25

exile"[1], when the theme of Miriam's song was unfolded at length, and the whole attributed to Moses, the greater personality.

b. The Pledge of Eternal War with Amalek[2], ascribed to Moses, is "our earliest literary witness to the immemorial enmity between Israel and Amalek"[3] ...

> "Yahweh hath sworn: (A hand is lifted up upon the throne of Jah). Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Says Peritz:

> "Rephidim, meaning 'support', and a cultic story, accounting for the existence of an altar and the sacred symbol of the wonder-working rod, ... are combined in the name 'Jehovah-nissi', meaning Jehovah is my banner-staff', ... perpetuated in what appears as a war-cry: 'Hand at the banner-staff of Jehovah; Jehovah fights with Amalek from generation to generation.'"[4]

This "imprecation of high antiquity"[5] strikingly proclaims at once a warring and revengeful Yahweh and Israel's faith in his arbitrary judgment. The God of Israel in common with Chemosh of Moab, the Egyptian War-Baal, and other great deities of surrounding peoples, would not blush to wreak vengeance upon an aggressive enemy. But the contest here - to gain exclusive possession of the most copious fountain in all the region - could not justly bring forth a pledge of eternal hatred by the God of the victors upon the vanquished[6]. Personal and race animosity

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1. Gray, G.B.: Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 46
2. Ex. 17:16
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 3
4. Op. cit., p. 83
5. Sellin, Op. cit., p. 36
6. cf. Smith, H.P.: Op. cit., p. 54

receive here the highest sanction, being read into the character of deity: it was Yahweh's vow, cruel and relentless. So childish a pronouncement, that enmity should continue 'forever and ever' suggests a decree brought forth by the clever manipulation of an oracle.

c. The Ritual of the Ark[1] constitutes another bit of cultic formulae, revealing a primitive conception of the Ark of the Covenant, with Yahweh of hosts hovering over the cherubim on its cover. "When it was set out at the head of the army these words were spoken:

'Arise, Yahweh
that Thine enemies be scattered,
and they that hate Thee flee before Thee!'

when it came back from victory,

'Rest, O Yahweh,
Thou myriads of regiments of Israel!'

For Yahweh was the god of battle, worth myriads of regiments of Israel.[2]" If the day's adventure had been simply search for pasture, the signal for halting meant an invitation to 'Rest', or to 'Be seated, Jehovah, by the tribes of Israel'.[3]

Israel's heritage from the ancient past gave her the conception that her God should lead her festival processions, occupying some sacred seat which afforded him comfort, dignity and ease.

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1. Num. 10: 35 f.
2. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 3
3. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 91

> "Among the Egyptians each god had its sacred ship, on which the image of the god was borne in solemn procession up and down the Nile. In Babylonia corresponding arks or chests were similarly used to bear the images of the gods in the processions which marched along the sacred streets on certain great feast days." 1, 2

Yahweh permitted no image of himself, but his directing and guiding presence was symbolized in the Ark of the Covenant. Would the people have preferred to see the customary image of the god leading the march? Yahweh's followers were learning to think of a God who transcended physical anthropomorphism. His school provided a training, not in sight, but in insight. Whether the gracious Presence was leading them could not be seen; it could be proven only by the outcome of the day's adventure. If defeat came, he had not attended them and why not? They were taught to look for sin within themselves as the cause. In the discipline of the House of Israel, then, these incantations or prayers were answered. The divine assurance which glorified their festivities, their victories in war and their ordinary occupations, stayed them in defeat, and incited still greater adventures in faith. Thus the Ark, and the Covenant it immortalized, linked the tribes together and became the great glory of the nation,[3] as well as the terror and the marvel[4] of other nations. Even under David, the ark was still the best ally of Israel.[5]

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1. Kent, C.F.: Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History, p. 210
2. cf. the use of great idol-cars today, as of the Rath in North India, the Juggernaut in South India.
3. I. Sam. 4:7 f; 5:9, 10: 6:19 f.
4. I. Sam. 6:3
5. II. Sam. 11:11; 15:24 ff.

Two survivals of Semitic nature-worship, in original form admitting no conception of Yahweh, probably belong to this period before Israel's conception of one God as lord of all nature had supplanted the old conception of a nature deity.

d. The Song of the Well[1], celebrating the festal opening of a well in the desert, was evidently borrowed from the Arabs.

"Spring up, O well: sing in response to it,
Well that the princes digged,
The rulers and the people delved
With their sceptres and staves!
From the desert a gift!"

The Arabs assert that their chiefs dug the well, so the Israelites claimed that their princes had delved it with their own staffs, although in reality their part was probably nothing but symbolic action[2]. But more important is the water, which could spring up and flow, having "a life of its own, ... beneficent to men and animals"[3]. This life was undoubtedly that of an old Semitic deity whose fame Yahweh's ardent followers unwittingly perpetuated.

e. Joshua's Appeal to Sun and Moon[4], or to Shamash and Sin, commemorates the solar cult of the Semites as practised by the early Israelites:

"O Sun, stand thou still over Gibeon,
and Moon, over the vale of Aijalon!"

The prayer is not addressed to Yahweh, who might command

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1. Num. 21:17 f.
2. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 4
3. Smith, H.P.: Op. cit., p. 18
4. Josh. 10:12

sun and moon, as lesser gods, or as gods of another nation, to stand still. Instead, Joshua appeals directly to the 'baals of the sky'[1] to give him the precious hours required to win his victory for Yahweh. The sun-god's divine prerogative of executing judgment and giving oracles is here reflected[2] while the moon-god as ruler of the calendar and of mundane prosperity is appealed to, so that according to his custom, he might attend the night-expeditions of his worshipers.[3] Inferences from the solar cult persisted long in Israel.[4]

f. Of this group of poems, the crowning number is known as The Song of Deborah[5], the triumphal ode which signalized Israel's victory over Sisera. Scholars consider this the oldest poem in the Old Testament, sung contemporaneously with the event - voicing a triumph for Israel's armies and for Israel's poetic art, as well. More significant yet, it ascribes to Yahweh alone the powers and provinces which in any other ancient nation would be exercised by a group of their chief deities.[6]

Yahweh's dwelling-place was in the heavenly heights, where were the store-houses of the rain, but he had a throne on 'his holy mountain'. Thunder, lightning, storm-winds, earthquakes were under his control alone. Centuries

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1. Wood, W.C.: Op. cit., p. 66
2. cf. Ibid., p. 73
3. cf. Ibid., p. 74
4. II Ki. 20:11; Isa. 38:8; 49:10; Ps. 121:6
5. Judges 5, written 1200-1100 B.C.
6. cf. Driver, G.R.: Op. cit., p. 151

later the Psalmists recall how

> "the earth shook,
> Yea, the heavens dropped (rain) at the presence
> of God; [1]
> Yon Sinai (shook) at the presence of God,"
> .....
> "The foundations also of the mountains trembled
> And swayed to and fro because He was angry." [2]

Alert to their need, he "comes from his sacred seat far in the south to the rescue of his people"[3]:

> "Yahweh, when Thou wentest forth from Seir,
> when Thou marchedst from Edom's field,
> The earth trembled, the heavens also swayed,
> yea, the clouds poured water,
> the mountains quaked at the presence of
> Yahweh, God of Israel [4]
> .....
>
> "Bless ye Yahweh
> Ye that ride...ye that sit...and ye that walk...
> Far from the noise of archers,
> In the places of drawing water,
> There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of
> Yahweh
> Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel. ...
> Yahweh came down for me against the mighty." [5]

The paean of praise is interrupted by rebuke for disloyalty:

> "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of Yahweh
> Curse bitterly its inhabitants,
> Because they came not to the help of Yahweh
> To Yahweh's help among the heroes." [6]

Yet,

> "From heaven fought the stars [7]
> From their courses they fought against Sisera."

"Belief in the personality of the heavenly bodies was

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1. Psalm 58:8
2. Psalm 18:7
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 9
4. Ibid., p. 7
5. Judges 5:10 f.
6. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 7
7. Ibid.

widespread in the ancient East"[1], says W.O.E. Oesterley[2]. Yahweh was clearly a battle-god, called upon if his help would be of use, worshiped if it was worth-while[3]. Israel's need of him when facing danger was doubtless the need most keenly felt for generations. Says Knudson:

> "Wars were at first the supreme interest of the nation. Israel had the task of conquering Canaan, and then consolidating their newly won territory. ...This task engaged the energies of the nation for several centuries, and during this time it was inevitable that the battlefield should be the place where the divine presence would be most urgently sought and the divine help most clearly perceived." [4]

2. Proverbs and fables — Leaving the battlefield and its more spectacular evidences of Yahweh's power, a next development is found in the ethical and moral implication embedded in certain proverbs and fables, and in prophetic blessings and oracles. Of the first group, two notably reveal analyses of personal character in man's relation to Yahweh.

a. The Proverb of the Ancients - "from the wicked comes forth wickedness"[5] - is "perhaps the oldest proverb which has come down to us in poetic form"[6]. As quoted by David when realizing the full import of Saul's malice toward him, it shows a clear conception of the evil heart of the would-be murderer of a loyal friend. Whatever the content of 'sin' or 'wickedness' may be to other people -

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1. "Judges", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 363
2. See Isa. 24:21, 40:26
3. cf. Oesterley, W.O.E.: Op. cit., p. 363
4. The Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 118
5. I Sam. 24:13
6. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 9

neglect of ceremony or ritual error - with David it appears as grave moral iniquity. Out of a heart plotting murder comes this wickedness; a corrupt tree naturally bearing evil fruit.[1] "But", adds David graciously, "My hand shall not be upon thee", suggesting perhaps that he could safely leave vengeance to God, but certainly that he could not touch the sacred person of Yahweh's anointed king. To the ancients the divinity that hedged a king was not a mere sentiment of respect but a divine reality; to lay hands upon a holy person was sacrilege.[2]

b. Jotham's Fable of the Trees' Choice of a King[3] rebukes Abimelech's ambition to rule the nation of Israel. As a son of Gideon by a Canaanite concubine, his origin and character are analyzed by his half-brother Jotham,[4] with stinging sarcasm:

> "The trees went forth on a time to anoint them a king,
> And they said to the olive, 'Reign over us!'
> But the olive said unto them,
> 'Should I leave my fatness
> Which gods and men prize in me,
> And go to sway over the trees?'"

Fig-tree and grape vine in turn, receiving the same invitation, make similar response, having no mind to leave their good fruit which cheers gods and men, to go and sway over the trees.

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1. Matt. 7:17
2. cf. Micklem, N.: "First and Second Samuel", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 395
3. Judges 9
4. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 111

"Then said all the trees unto the thorn,
'Come thou and reign over us!'
And the thorn said unto the trees,
'If in truth ye anoint
Me as king over you,
Then come, take refuge in my shade,
But if not, fire shall proceed from the thorn,
And devour the cedars of Lebanon.'"

In other words, only worthless and dangerous people were willing to become monarchs, said Jotham, and disaster must inevitably come alike to those who were loyal or disloyal to such rulers.[1] Abimelech represents the amalgamation of Canaanite and Israelite elements before harmony had been achieved by the process, and the Deuteronomistic editor with insight ascribes the failure to Canaanite religious influence.[2,3]

3. Prophetic blessings and oracles — Certain oracular passages explain prevailing conditions of the author's own time as the fulfillment of prediction by illustrious ancestors. Written in exalted mood, consequently in rhythmic form, these magically effective Blessings are now classified as documents of the time which they predict and not of the ancestors themselves.[4] The Blessings of Noah and of Jacob and the Oracles of Balaam thus deal with fulfillment.

a. The Blessing of Noah,[5] introduces the prophetical glance at the character and capabilities of the three great ethnic nations which were his descendants.[6]

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1. cf. Bewer, Op. cit., p. 10
2. cf. Peritz, Op. cit., p. 111
3. Ref. Judges 8:27 b; 30 f.; 33-35
4. cf. Bewer, Op. cit., p. 11
5. Gen. 9:25 ff.
6. Driver, S.R.: Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 21

"Cursed be Canaan!
Meanest slave shall he be to his brothers!

Bless Yahweh, the tents of Shem,
and let Canaan be his slave!

God enlarge Japheth,
and let him dwell in the tents of Shem,
And let Canaan be his slave." [1]

Shem and Japheth, more reverent toward their ancestor,[2] more pure-minded than Ham and therefore more pleasing to Yahweh their God, became masters of Ham's son Canaan and his descendants, even in the land which this licentious people possessed. If this Blessing were written after David's conquest of Canaan, as seems probable,[3] Israel and Philistia, dwelling in the tents of Shem, doubtless felt that it gave them license to subject the Canaanites to taskwork.

b. "The Blessing of Jacob"[4] says Sellin, "is a collection of sayings about the different tribes - partly laudatory, partly condemnatory, partly prophetic - which are referred to the dying Patriarch, and were no doubt traditionally preserved at one of their sanctuaries. They all presuppose that the tribes are already settled in their Palestinian territories.[5] ...Some of the sayings may have in the course of time expanded or transformed ... It is also possible that the Babylonian Zodiac is reflected in the whole collection." [6]

For the purpose of this study the following excerpts only have significance:

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1. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 11. See also Gen. 9:25 f.
2. Gen. 9:20 ff.
3. Sellin's alternatives: either in pre-Mosaic days or after partial conquest of Canaan, when burning hatred of Canaan betrays itself, Op. cit., p. 33
   Also Bewer: Op. cit., p. 12
4. Gen. 49:1-27
5. Gen. 49:7 f., 13, 14 f., 16, 20, 26
6. Op. cit., p. 34

"I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah."[1] Joseph, already a 'fruitful bough', had been delivered from persecution and supported 'by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob' ... His father foresees a continuance of divine favor toward him:

> "By the god of thy Father, who shall help thee,
> And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee,
> With blessings of heaven above,
> Blessings of the deep that couches beneath,
> Blessings of breast and of womb." [2]

'Salvation' though undefined as to form or time of consummation, and the gifts of heaven, of earth, and of procreation, together comprise a whole realm of divine activities formerly ascribed to a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Here Yahweh alone is recognized as giver and doer. He is one; God's unity in this sense seems clearly indicated. He only is; there is no other God: his unity in this second sense[3] seems here about to be recognized. Jacob's declaration, comprehensively interpreted, would span both polybaalism and polyyahwism. To what period does it belong?

Driver notes that the historical and geographical conditions reflected in Jacob's blessing are those of the period of the Judges, Samuel and David.[4] Yet, even after David's time, Yahweh was not consistently recognized as God of fertility in nature and of productivity in men and animals. However, this declaration for Joseph's

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1. Gen. 48:18
2. Gen. 49:25
3. Knudson, A.C.: The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p. 68
4. cf. Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 19

line, viewed in the light of its fulfillment, illustrates how thought was growing. In the words of Knudson:

> "The thoroughgoing monotheism, in which the Old Testament ... culminated, had its roots ... in the actual experience and practical needs of the people. Not speculation but the logic of events was the moving force in its development." 1

c. The Oracles of Balaam[2], "not real predictions but poetic descriptions of the time of Saul and David ... are put into Balaam's mouth by the same literary device which ascribed the Blessings to the ancestors."[3] Hebrew religious thought pictures Yahweh's revelation of his integrity and his purposes to a non-Israelite who declares:

> "How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed?
> And how shall I denounce, whom Yahweh hath not denounced?
> .....
> Who can count the dust of Jacob,
> Or number the myriads of Israel?
> Let me die the death of the righteous,
> And let my last end be like His!
> .....
> God is not man that he should break his word,
> Neither the son of man, that He should change His mind.
> Should He promise and not do it?
> Or speak and not make it good?
> Behold, I have received orders to bless:
> And He has blessed and I cannot reverse it.
> He had not beheld calamity in Jacob;
> Nor seen trouble in Israel:
> Yahweh his God is with him,
> And the shout for his king is among them.
> God who brought them forth out of Egypt,
> Is for him like the horns (?) of the wild-ox,
> Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel,
> What has God wrought!
> * * *
> The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
> Who hears the words of God,

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1. Op. cit., p. 91
2. Num. 23:8-10; 19-23; 24:3-9, 17
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 13

Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down, and having his eyes opened:
How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob,
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
.....
Like cedars which Yahweh has planted,
like palms beside the waters.
.....
God who brought him out of Egypt
Is for him like the horns of the wild-ox:
He shall devour the nations, his adversaries...
.....
Blessed is every one that blesses thee,
And cursed is every one that curses thee.
.....
A star has shone forth out of Jacob,
A sceptre has risen out of Israel." [1]

To be sure, Yahweh's integrity is measured in terms of the material prosperity of his people, and by cruel triumphs over her foes. Balaam's revelation lacks moral qualities: he sees no calamity in Jacob, no trouble in Israel; no ills of the social or religious order, no struggle between ritual and ethics - the supreme concern of the divine heart and mind escape him altogether.[2] Yet there is more than literary merit in this narrative of a famous Ammonite seer who through ecstacy had sought oracles against Israel and who was instead compelled to proclaim blessings upon her, foe though she be to his own people.[3] Kent suggests that the sayings originated in the time of Saul and David, with a court poet greeting the victorious army of Israel.[4] Gathered up by the Judaean writer and woven into his narrative,[5] these oracles reveal certain popular opinions which

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1. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 14 f.
2. cf. Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophet and His Problems, p. 35
3. cf. Ibid., p. 11
4. cf. Heroes and Crises, p. 223
5. cf. Sellin, E.: Op. cit., p. 36

were destined to awaken new religious convictions in Israel:

a. "A curse, especially if it proceeds from the lips of one who has great influence with the deity, possesses a malign power." 1

b. The trance or ecstacy of the ancient prophets, however induced, was a preparation to receive divine truth. On his part, God is seeking to reveal himself to man.

c. A true prophet of any country might give voice to great truths, unwelcome though they be to his own people. Truth is divine, and in a sense, universal.

d. A clear conception of the integrity, truthfulness and faithfulness of God could so attract a hostile yet devout seeker after truth as to win his allegiance. Dimly foreseen is the declaration of Christ: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself". 2

4. Early poems of the Monarchy — With the inauguration of the kingship in Israel, the personal valor and the personal convictions and emotions of the king are commemorated. These poems, though not religious in themselves, yet set forth a certain realization of divine destiny in Yahweh's chief representative. Three such poems thus portray David in heroic stature.

The Song celebrating the prowess of David[3]

"Saul has slain his thousands
and David his ten thousands",

came as an outburst of admiration for a champion of Yahweh in the work of exterminating the Philistines.

David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan

exalts the heroism of Yahweh's leaders in battle:

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1. Kent, C.F.: Heroes and Crises, p. 223
2. John 12:32
3. I Sam. 18:7

"Thy glory, O Israel, is slain on the heighths,
how are the heroes fallen.
.....
Jonathan's bow never turned back
nor did empty come back the sword of Saul.
Saul and Jonathan, the beloved and dear,
in their lives and their death not divided!
They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions." 1

David's personal sorrow and love here mingle, unlighted by any thought of immortality, or hope of reunion.[2]

"Daughters of Israel, weep ye for Saul
who clothed you with scarlet and fine linen.
.....
O Jonathan, slain on thy heights,
I am in anguish for thee, O Jonathan my brother!
Very dear hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women." 3

In his grief over Saul, David shows an outlook which is fundamentally religious in that it had delivered him from personal pettiness and ambition.[4]

David's Lament over Abner,[5] in its very brevity shows David's sincerity. Expressing no love, it yet honors the hero whose foul murder has jeopardized David's secret diplomacy.[6]

"Must Abner die as a fool dies?
Thy hands were not bound,
Thy feet not put in fetters.
As one falls before knaves, so thou didst fall." [7]

Or, "As one putteth away criminals, wast thou put away".[8]

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1. II Sam. 1:19-27
2. cf Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 25
3. Ibid., p. 16 f.
4. cf Micklem, N.: "First and Second Samuel", Abingdon Commentary, p. 399
5. II. Sam.3:33 f.
6. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 17
7. Ibid., 16 f.
8. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 400

David's high generosity has its foundation in his religion; in his thought, Yahweh's cause is not to be served by murder such as this.[1]

What were the religious practices underlying the literature just reviewed? The period, which ends about 1000 B.C., falls into four distinct stages of religious development and popular practices may be studied under these headings, namely: (1) Israel's first tribal deity; (2) the emergence of Yahweh; (3) syncretism with Canaanitish worship; and (4) reunion under the monarchy.

B. Israel's First Tribal Deity

The classic reference to ancient Israelitic polytheism is given in Joshua 24:2 - "Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods." Israel's own tradition points back to Canaan where she worshiped her 'God of the fathers' who had called Abraham out of Chaldea, and had attended Isaac and Jacob in their rovings through Syria, Canaan and Egypt before the enslavement there. Is there a literary clue to Israel's professed devotion to one God out of many in pre-Mosaic times? Was there an early dawning of the henotheistic ideal?

Dr. Kittel finds a possible answer to this question in the use of the generic title '-el', preserved as it is in Hebrew names of the traditional period in question. Abraham called his sons Isma-el and Isaaq-el

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1. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 400

(full form); Isaaq-el named his son Jacob-el; later Jacob-el, renamed Isra-el, became the father of the nation. His son was Joseph-el. Now '-el', as 'a name formation well attested in inscriptions', takes the place of the real name of a god. "Why was it", asks Dr. Kittel, "that the generic title was chosen to designate the ancestral or favorite god instead of the proper name? ... To his worshipers precisely this God appeared to be the principal God, the God."[1]

Whatever may have suggested the preference for a generic title, its significance lies in its reference to one favorite Godhead, who is always 'strong'[2] in his various attitudes toward man. Divinity designated in a number of gods, is gradually transcended. Other and lesser 'elim' there may be - in fact their presence is inferred by comparison - but if the el-deity or 'living God' is thought of as el-roi, seeing his worshipers, a hearer and answerer of prayer; el-'olam, eternally living, throughout past, present and future, an eternal helper; el-shaddai, God my mountain;[3] el-'elyon, The Most High, then the nature being or nature power as god is here seen to be supplanted by God as person. "In no wise bound to nature; not powers of nature personally conceived ... but a personal Godhead, a kindly and accessible helper, and at the

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1. Kittel, R.: The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 42
2. The root meaning of 'el': cf. Knudson: The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p. 116
3. Driver, G.R.: Op. cit., p. 123

same time a protector and a chastiser who towered above the limits of human time and power and indeed above other divine beings."[1] His gentleness toward Abraham, even under another title, is evident, also the fact that, wrestling with Jacob after the manner of the ancient 'wild river-spirit' in the end "he becomes a kindly being who does not part from mankind without bestowing a blessing"[2].

The use of El as a true proper name is the next step. To be sure the first usages are not clear. Was Jacob's altar at Shechem called 'el, God of Israel', or 'el is the God of Israel'? Did the altar at Bethel signify the 'el of Bethel' or that 'el is in Bethel'? Such questions are less important than the fact that the God of Shechem and of Bethel personally protected Jacob and Israel. "By the 'God of the fathers' we understand that el-deity (who was) worshiped sometimes as el-'olam, sometimes as el-shaddai, and sometimes exalted above all others as el-'elyon."[3]

C. Emergence of Yahweh as Israel's God

1. The Call of Moses

In view of the credence given to the tradition of their first tribal deity, it now becomes logical to reject the theory held by Robertson Smith and others to the effect that the Hebrews, because they lived the nomad or bedouin life, must therefore have had the full polydemonistic religion of their Semitic kinsmen.

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1. Kittell, R.: The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 43
2. Ibid., Ref. Gen. 32:23 f.
3. Ibid., p. 48

"This could apply only to an insignificant percentage of those tribes out of which the Israel of Moses was composed. For this very reason we must not regard them as typical of the nation in its beginnings,"[1] says Kittel. Rather it is to be inferred that the el-deity was not wholly forgotten even during the days of bondage in Egypt. "Israel did not rise from the soil at a stamp from Moses' foot: it must have had a previous history."[2]

With a slave-psychology born of generations of oppression, the Hebrews could not have emancipated themselves from a rule so despotic as was that of Merneptah, except under the personal inspiration of a great leader. Says Noyes:

> "The rising of the enslaved tribes and their subsequent doings in the wilderness presuppose the initiative and the continued leadership of a dominant personality. A man of transcendent religious ardor, a prophet directly accredited of God, was needed to quicken the heavily afflicted, broken-spirited shepherds into the necessary resolution." 3

Says Kittel:

> "If ever Carlyle's remark about the heroes of history is appropriate, it is here. Were Moses not an historical figure, another would have to be invented: for only a man such as he could be a leader in that age." 4

Recounting the hopes and ambitions which had been their fathers', Moses declared that the God of their fathers was now calling them out of Egypt into their own

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1. The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 47
2. Ibid., p. 40
3. Op. cit., p. 50
4. The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 51

land. Under his new name, yet the same God, Yahweh had renewed his ancient plan and purpose for them.[1] And the people believed; and when they heard that Yahweh had visited them and had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.[2]

Why did the people believe in this revelation from Yahweh? "Moses had experienced ... a revival of ancestral religion: in a measure new and yet not quite new; forgotten in the adverse and foreign Goshen environment, and now once more brought to the Hebrew tribes instinct with a new enthusiasm."[3] His preparation for the task had been long and thorough. Receiving in youth the education of an Egyptian prince, in early manhood he espoused the cause of his enslaved people. His hot resentment against their oppressors may have made him a murderer, and a fugitive from justice in Midian.[4] Here, happily, his kinsmen through Abraham and Keturah[5] had taught him to worship the God of their common heritage, not in his ancient character as 'The Elohim', or 'El', nor yet as the more powerful 'El-Shaddai', but as 'Yahweh', the great I AM who dwelt on Mount Horeb-Sinai near-by. Probably through the teachings of the priest Jethro, his father-in-law, Moses received fresh insight into the attributes of Yahweh. Certain it is that three ideas took possession of him:

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1. Ex. 3:13-19; 4:29 ff.
2. cf. Ex. 4:31
3. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 70
4. Ex. 2:11-15
5. Gen. 25:1,2

(1) The oppression of his people was no longer to be endured; (2) Their bonds could not be broken by human strength or strategy, but the power of Yahweh was adequate for the task; (3) On their part, the slaves must believe that Yahweh could and would deliver them. Moses' personal convictions went further. Pondering the question as to who should lead them out, the shrinking man he is reputed to be received a personal commission from Yahweh,[1] a psychological experience so profound that all the trying years that followed could not shake his confidence, and Moses entered upon his task as leader. Thus,

> "The very call of Moses, given by the three sources with varying details, conveys three essential facts: (1) the Midianite environment as the source whence came the inspiration of Moses; (2) the new element in the religion of the Hebrews, represented by the new name of Jehovah; and (3) the personal element in the experience of Moses through whom the new religious truth was transmitted to his people." [2]

"And the people believed ... and worshiped." I AM had spoken, and with sublime significance of greatness and sincerity and purpose.[3] I AM THAT I AM - this was the pledge of the divine deliverer. Moreover, for the future, I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE - herein was promise for Israel. Moses declared "I AM hath sent me unto you", and even a serf-mind could grasp his meaning.

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1. Ex. 3:4
2. Peritz: I.J.: Op. cit., p. 68
3. Driver, S.R.: "Exodus", Cambridge Bible,

2. Exodus and Covenant

The crossing of the Red Sea was a signal triumph, whether made possible by the piling up of waters by a strong east wind all night,[1] or by a sudden dividing of the waters at the command of Yahweh by Moses.[2] By whatever means the mighty intervention of Yahweh was asserted, the event marked the beginning of Hebrew national history "as much", says Peritz, "as the signing of the Declaration of Independence was the beginning of the American Republic ... It was nothing short of the birthday of the Hebrew nation - but it was only the birthday."[3] The exultation felt by the people, voiced at once in the Song of Miriam, was soon crystallized in the covenant which further distinguished this nation from all others. Generations afterward Amos cites both events as proof that Yahweh had known Israel alone of all the nations of the earth,[4] while Hosea finds in them the evidences of a father's tender care for his child.[5]

"The ancient Semites conceived of their deities as dwelling in certain definite abodes and capable of entering into solemn covenants with men and tribes,"[6] says Kent. Later covenants assumed the dignity of a compact or pledge between the parties, but in these early days of Israel, the superior party, as deity, was thought of as imposing his will upon the inferior: the covenant or 'berith'

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1. As J relates, Ex. 14:21, second clause
2. As Peritz accounts for it, Ex. 14:21, first and final clauses
3. Op. cit., p. 79
4. Amos 3:1,2
5. Hosea 11:1-4
6. Heroes and Crises, p. 190

becoming a synonym for commandment.[1] Yahweh, through Moses, speaks to Israel:

> "Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."[2]

Tradition pictures Moses receiving the ordinances of Yahweh on his holy mountain, Horeb-Sinai, writing them in a book, building an altar for sacrifice, and reading to the assembled tribes, who respond: "All that Yahweh hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." And Moses sealed the covenant with sacrificial blood.[3]

Even though it is impossible to know the terms of this covenant,[4] its importance as a bond is unquestionable. In covenant-relationship akin to marriage Yahweh wooed his bride Israel[5] whose response of passionate devotion became the moving-force in her religious development.[6]

New in the history of religion was a God of such morality, power and transcendence. Yahweh had delivered an oppressed people who had no vital claim upon him, and in a land foreign to himself. New, too, between man and deity, was a relation"so deep, so firm, so intense, that it was able to bear the strain of every (later) crisis".[7] As outlined above,[8] their conception of Yahweh's character brought

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1. cf. Knudson, A.C.: Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 176
2. Ex. 19:5,6, recorded by J
3. Ex. 24:3-8, recorded by E
4. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p. 141
5. Hos. 2:14-16; Jer. 2:2
6. cfKnudson, A.C.: Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 122 f.
7. Ibid.
8. Page 43 of this paper

with it a sense of obligation to perform the service he required of them.[1] Thus Israel's religion, unique in its moral and ethical implications, bears witness to her early genius.

"Yet, if we would correctly realize the content of Israel's conception of Jehovah in those early days," warns Peritz, "we must not neglect the perspective of history. ... It is possible that Jehovah was thought of in connection with a volcanic mountain, whose symbols were the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, terrible to behold or to approach."[2] If, indeed, the terrors of volcanic eruption accompanied the majestic appearance of God, this ancient experience gave Israel its traditional imagery for describing great theophanies.[3]

3. Wilderness life and discipline

The pledge of Eternal War with Amalek, and the Song of the Well furnish key-notes to the life upon which Israel now entered with its struggle for maintenance, and its joy when water was sufficient. Here, too, the Ritual of the Ark of the Covenant had its birth. Under the tutelage of the Midianite priest Jethro,[4] Moses as prophet-priest entered upon his great task of interpreting the will of Yahweh, and of training for citizenship in Canaan, while on the march or living at the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea. Further, "they must be welded into a people with a common interest and purpose before

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1. cf. Knudson, A.C.: Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 122 f.
2. Op.cit. p. 88
3. cf. Leslie, E.A.: "Psalms I - LXXII", Abingdon Commentary, p. 523
4. Ex. 18:17-24

they could hope to wrest from its ancient, strongly established possessors a bountiful territory which they could make their home.[1] In the end the generation of men who had experienced that signal deliverance at the Red Sea could not take possession of the land beyond Jordan - this remained for their children to achieve. Yet Moses "awakened in an oppressed and discouraged people the feeling of national consciousness; he cemented them into a band having common hopes and aspirations; and he united them by the common bond of Jehovah their God, to whom they bound themselves by moral obligations."[2] By what means did he accomplish these ends?

Three demands of Yahweh were rigidly enjoined: (1) the rite of circumcision; (2) the keeping holy of sacred objects, chief of which was the Ark of the Covenant; and (3) the maintenance of the Tent of Meeting, with a trained priesthood.

The rite of circumcision, common among the Semites was now submitted to as a form of consecration to Yahweh, in order to insure fertility.

By means of the Ark of the Covenant the presence of Yahweh was brought from his faraway summit among the clouds, to dwell with his people or to accompany them on the march, enthroned upon the cherubim.[3] The Ark may have

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1. Noyes, Carleton: Op. cit., p. 50
2. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 93
3. I Sam. 4:4

contained some object which represented the deity - perhaps the stones bearing the Law.[1] The Semitic theory of divine residence in stones would in this case be heightened by the fact that these stones were originally taken from the sacred mountain, thus containing the very essence of Yahweh himself.[2]

To the Tent of Meeting the people resorted to inquire of Yahweh; that is, to consult the divine oracle, says Peritz, adding: "It is most probable that this oracle consisted of two sacred stones, Urim and Thummin, which were used as lots, representing yea and nay, and which were manipulated by means of a linen garment or pocket, called an Ephod[3]". The Levites as wearers of the Ephod, manipulated the oracle.

Moreover, in his personal ideals and achievements, Moses profoundly impressed his followers. As their first priest, he became the adjudicator of cases brought to him by contending parties. His decisions were termed 'the statutes and directions of God' and from these precedents, a body of civil and criminal law gradually grew up. Says G.B. Gray: "Moses here appears as priest in legislative activity, ... creating that nucleus of Hebrew law by the same method as that characteristically used by the later priests in amplifying the law, viz., the oracular consultation of God."[4]

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1. Ex. 25:16; Heb. 9:4
2. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 144 f.
3. Op. cit., p. 91
4. Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 205

As for that mighty legal system so fully ascribed to Moses in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, the priesthood of Aaron and the transformation of the Tent of Meeting into a gorgeous sanctuary, these are alike recognized as the elaborations of the later priestly writer.[1] Israel's national religious life must have begun with simple ritual and worship, because centuries afterward we hear her prophets rebuking the divided kingdoms because, contrary to Mosaic practice, they have substituted burnt-offerings and sacrifices for the true worship of Yahweh. To Israel Amos announces:

> "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of hosts, the Lord:
> Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings
> in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" 2

and in Judah, Jeremiah declares:

> "Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel;
> I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them
> in the day that I brought them out of the land of
> Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices." 3

Did Moses, then, in his interpretation of Yahweh to Israel, combine the offices of priest, law-giver and prophet? The three are not incompatible; the later representations depicting him as law-giver and prophet, seem rather to provide the logical continuation of the priesthood, which alone belongs to the early Hebrew tradition. However, as noted by Gray: "There is one point in which all three presentations meet: Moses was an organ of

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1. Produced as late as 500 B.C.
2. Amos 5:25
3. Jer. 7:22 f.

revelation; and among such various organs of revelation as Hebrew religious theory admitted, Moses was to Hebrew tradition unique."[1]

Says Montefiore: "The supreme gift of Moses to Israel was a moral passion, a certain intensity that gave a new touch to their religion".[2] Did his contemporaries correlate this moral passion with the tradition[3] that Moses communed with Yahweh 'face to face as a man speaketh to his friend'? Impossible as it is to penetrate into the secret of such communings, "the expression", says Wade, yet "describes suggestively the principal feature of the Mosaic teaching, so far as it can be recovered - its precise and practical directness, and the lofty and pure spirit which animates it."[4] Thus from the time of Moses, thoughtful Israelites came to a unique knowledge of the moral and spiritual nature of God.[5]

Moses' personality was able, then, to combine two aspects of the nature of Yahweh: those traits which were derived from an ancient terrible nature-deity of the wilderness, with the attributes of a great moral God who protected the moral order in Israel ..... a God unique, supreme, holding himself jealously apart from all other gods.[6]

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1. Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 210
2. The Origin and Development of the Hebrew Religion, p.46
3. Recorded by J, E and P. Num. 12:8; Ex. 33:11-17; Num. 7:8,9
4. Old Testament History, p. 164
5. cf. Ibid., p. 163
6. cf. The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 66

When, as Dr. Kittel explains, after Moses' death these two views of the nature of Yahweh fell asunder, each aspect found some among the people to adopt and approve it, and each group strove to conquer within their circle, with the result that two fundamentally different religions evolved: the one popular, the other higher; and each opposing the other; yet having this in common, that they both confessed the name of Yahweh.[1]

D. Syncretism: Israel and Canaan

1. The conquest

To Mount Nebo of the Abarim Mountains in Moab, tradition brought Moses at the close of life to view Israel's future home-land lying westward across the Jordan valley. With its city-crowned heights and its fertile valleys good to look upon, this was the highway between East and West, North and South, destined to produce the great middlemen of the world, the Semitic carriers of commerce and religion.[2] Here, twenty-six centuries before, the primitive Amorite worshiped his cave-dwelling deity without questioning the truth or value of his religious beliefs and practices.[3] But for half that time, namely, for thirteen centuries now, the Canaanite with his pantheon had been developing the highly-organized religious institutions shown in Chapter II. Now Yahweh, the lone God of the nomad tribes was about to enter the land, as Israel's tribal Warlord, bent on conquest.

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1. cf. The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 66
2. cf. Smith, G.A.: The Historical Geography of the Holy Land, p. 5
3. cf. Brightman, E.S.: Religious Values, p. 16

With a few swift strokes, Carleton Noyes summarizes the sweeping in of the Hebrews upon Canaan, still impelled as they were, by a fierce vehemence, born of the desert. "As they threw themselves, ill-equipped but shouting their wild battle-cries, against the strong cities, the terror they spread counted to them for strength. Victorious,[1] they were fanatic and pitiless", yet inspired by religious fervor.

> "The cruelty of their passionate race was intensified by divine sanction, for Israel's battles were the battles of Yahweh, God of hosts. So they 'devoted' to Yahweh the defeated enemy. The ban implied utter extermination to the conquered, death by sword, by burning, hanging, stoning and complete destruction of material. Israel had yet to affirm its difference from other peoples."[2]

"Fragments of an old account of the conquest of Canaan ... by the individual efforts of the separate tribes ... narrate the positive successes of Judah and Simeon[3] and the 'House of Joseph'[4] only. Certain tribes, viz. Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan failed to dispossess the native inhabitants."[5] "The Canaanites would dwell in the land ... and when Israel waxed strong, they put the Canaanites to taskwork and did not utterly drive them out."[6] Thus "by colonizing the unoccupied portions of Palestine, by intermarriage and by alliance with

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1. Op. cit., p. 116
2. Ibid., p. 116 f.
3. Judg. 1:1-20
4. Judg. 1:22-26
5. Driver, S.R.: Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 162
6. Judg. 1:27 f.

the native tribes, and in some cases by open attack, the Hebrews slowly became masters of the land."[1] Yet the Canaanites remained teachers of agriculture and of city life to the tribes of Israel.

To this period belong Joshua's Appeal to Sun and Moon and the incomparable Song of Deborah. The Blessing of Noah doubtless became increasingly popular wherever the sons of Canaan were subjected to the Hebrews, as sons of Shem.

2. The Decalogue at Shechem

In his last days "Joshua made a covenant with the people and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem", writing the words in the book of the law of God and he took a great stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Yahweh.[2] This codification probably comprised the oldest decalogue found in our sources, namely:

"1. Six days shalt thou do thy work, but on the seventh thou shalt desist.

2. The feast of the unleavened bread shalt thou keep, according as I commanded thee at the appointed time in the month Abib; for in it thou camest out of Egypt.

3. None shall appear before me empty.

4. The feast of harvests, the first-fruits of thy labors, shalt thou keep.

5. The feast of in-gathering at the exit of the year thou shalt keep.

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1. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers of United Israel, p. 19
2. cf. Pfeiffer, R.H.: "The Oldest Decalogue", Journal of Biblical Literature, p. 306 f.
   Ref.: Josh. 24:25 f. cf. 8:32

6. Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Yahweh.

7. Thou shalt not sacrifice with leaven the blood of my sacrifice.

8. Neither shall there remain all night the fat of my feast until morning.

9. The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring unto the house of Yahweh, thy God.

10. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk." [1]

These ten primitive commands, in their primitive form earlier than the monarchy, reflect Semitic customs, ritual and lore. "The three annual feasts", says Pfeiffer, "are unmistakably Canaanitish."[2]

3. New problems for Israel — Scholars frequently compare the coming of Israel into Canaan to a countryman's moving into town to make his residence there. Wherever they gained a foothold the newcomers began to adjust themselves to the civilization around them. The sharp contrast afforded by their own uncouthness would be keenly felt, especially by the younger and more ambitious among them.

But the impact which involved ultimate elements was that of Yahweh with the Baalim indigenous to Canaan. Here, too, adjustment was gradual, says Knudson:

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1. Ex. 23:12-19
2. Op. cit., p. 307

> "At first the Israelites after gaining possession of the land substituted Yahweh for the local Baals and spoke of him as the Baal of the land ... a dangerous practice (which) tended to obliterate the distinction between Yahweh-worship and Baal-worship, and tended also to confuse Yahweh with the local Baals." [1]

In time the proprietor-gods of the land resumed their sway.[2] This development probably came about as follows:

a. The Hebrews found they must become learners of the arts of the high civilization surrounding them.

b. Failures in their early attempts at farming or building were credited not to inexperience but to the displeasure of the proprietor-gods whom they had failed to worship acceptably. The question became pressing: "Shall we offend the Baalim and starve, or shall we worship them and have food and the comforts of life?" No less insistent were the claims of the Ashtarte and of the baals of the flocks. Hence the Hebrews came to share the belief that the generation of domestic animals and even of their own children would depend upon the favor of these arbitrary gods.

c. The onslaught of conquest had failed in some localities leaving the sturdy new-comers in half-possession of territory.[3] The Canaanite would dwell in the land and the Hebrew edict against intermarriage had not yet evolved or was little enforced. Enterprising young Hebrews,

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1. The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p. 70 f.
2. cf. Knudson, A.C.: "The Old Testament Conception of God", Abingdon Commentary, p. 159
3. cf. Judg. 1:21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35

ambitious to gain wealth and culture, found among Canaanite maidens the wives best fitted to help them attain their goal. This practice fixed upon many an Israelite's home the worship of the Baalim, as the influence of the wife and mother prevailed to make her religion an integral part of the national life.[1]

d. The land of Canaan flowed with milk and honey. Commenting on this F.J. McConnell says:

> "To speak in our modern terms, there were in this diet more calories than the children of Israel were accustomed to, and they tended to wax fat. ... In a word, the fuller material life into which Israel came brought with it a hazard to those moral qualities which suggest a type of lean and strenuous moral fervor."[2]

Inasmuch as this moral fervor conditions the appreciation of the moral qualities of God, the natural reaction upon Israel became evident to that group of Moses' followers who carried forward his teaching in its higher implications.

E. Reunion under the Monarchy

1. Political Having intermarried with the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and worshiping their Baalim and Ashteroth,[3] Israel's development suffered further arrest by the conquests which made the tribes subject in turn to Mesopotamia, to Moab, to Northern Canaan, to Midian and Ammon, and finally to Philistia, wealthiest and most

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1. Judg. 3:5 f.
2. Humanism and Christianity, p. 5
3. Judges 3:5-8. Source D

powerful of her neighbors (1080-1028). The patriarchal leadership, exercised by "Judges" or heroes who arose at critical moments of conquest, enslavement or oppression, had brought forth sporadic political advantages. Thus ended their first twelve decades in Canaan. Israel's religion was at its lowest ebb.[1]

At this juncture the Philistines captured the sacred Ark of the Covenant, and subjugated all central Palestine. This crisis demanded apt leadership and united action[2] and the prophet Samuel, with great foresight, brought about the kingship of both Saul and David. Saul failed to cope with this Philistine menace but David succeeded.[3] About the close of the century he established his political and religious capital in Jerusalem.

> "Jerusalem was David's own heroic acquisition and belonged neither to Judah nor Israel; its position was central and strong; it had now become the seat of the emblem of Jehovah's presence, associated with Israel's residence in the desert. Jerusalem thus tended to cement the tribes, create national sentiment and loyalty to the House of David." [4]

2. Religious Spiritual as well as political progress toward unity is traced in the two earliest sources,[5] namely, (1) A Biography of Samuel[6] and (2) The History of the Introduction of the Monarcy to the Establishment of Jerusalem as the Civil and Religious Centre

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1. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 385
2. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 123
3. cf. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 138
5. cf. New Century Bible
6. I Sam. 1; 2:11-26; 3; 15; 16:1-14

of the Kingdom.[1] In the three personalities which dominate this period, the noblest traditions of Moses flash forth, once more to counsel or warn all Israel, according to the integrity or the default of Samuel, Saul and David.

a. The Ministry of Samuel.

Samuel has been called the bridge between Moses and the prophets. A man of simple piety, who like Moses had heard the voice of Yahweh in the distress and doom of his people, his religion became subjective and personal, his convictions clear and stern. Mosaic principles received fresh enunciation through him. In the scene in which he rejects King Saul on the charge of 'disobedience', while he hews King Agag to pieces 'before Yahweh'[2], we see a recrudescence of "the old-fashioned, fierce, inexorable ways of warfare in the desert ... no accommodations for the sake of prudence and statecraft; disobedience to the absolute demands of the ban being repudiated as utterly as anything connected with Canaanite worship"[3].

The momentous religious interpretations of his day are directly traceable to him. Witness the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, and the bewildered elders making inquiry: "Are the gods of the Philistines stronger than Yahweh? Or is Yahweh displeased with us? Should we repent of some sin?"[4] "Many will have espoused the former view; it

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1. I Sam. 9-11; Sam. 6 excepting Biography in (3) and traditional, redactional and Deuteronomistic elements not used in this paper
2. cf. I Sam. 15:17-33
3. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 391
4. I Sam. 4:3

was a spiritual triumph that the latter prevailed"[1], says Micklem, who also calls attention to the loss of the high-priest's ephod in which syncretistic worship had evidently wrought change from a garment or pocket to a 'divine' image. Here occurs a fine contrast: the Ark, non-idolatrous symbol which forever recalls the austere worship of the invisible Yahweh in the wilderness, and the degraded ephod, Canaanite symbol of fertility-cults[2]. Israel, forgetting her lost ephod and mourning her stolen Ark of the Covenant, registers spiritual growth, while the guidance of Samuel is felt rather than expressed in the narrative.

Open-minded to the new tasks before him, Samuel felt most urgently the need of unity and believed that only a king could inspire it[3]. Kingly power had, indeed, been exercised by certain of the judges, as Gideon, Jepthah and Abimelech. So it is that "Samuel acts in strict accord with the national development when he, on his own initiative and under providential guidance, anoints Saul king."[4] Nor did he relinquish his own place as leader of the national-priestly party. The king had been exalted to political eminence, but he must not endanger the worship of Israel's God. Rebuking Saul for disobedience he gives utterance to 'the quintessence of the prophetic teaching'[5]

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1. Op. cit., p. 386
2. Ibid.
3. As J records it - I Sam. 9-10:16; 10:27-11:11
4. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 125
5. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 391

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams"[1]. "Yahweh hath rent the kingdom from thee this day and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou."[2]

Oddly, Samuel's autocratic power to make and unmake kings illustrates at once the people's confidence in him as Yahweh's spokesman and their own essential democracy. No thought of 'divine right' or 'apostolic succession' was current in the priesthood[3], as Samuel's succession to Eli shows. The kingship, by Samuel's determination, conforms to the same principle: "God calls a man to a task, to its duties and its privileges; the sons may be expected to carry on their father's work, but if the duties are neglected, the privileges are withdrawn"[4]. Saul's defection cost his princely son Jonathan all hope of royal succession, and the son of Jesse, whether obscure[5] or not[6], was anointed. The account which presents David as an unknown youth aims to set forth a religious teaching: "When no one thought anything of David, God, who knows men's hearts, had chosen him and put his spirit upon him, giving him a kingly soul" - not by some immutable predestination, but because he was worthy.[7,8]

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1. I Sam. 15:22
2. I Sam. 15:28
3. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 385
4. Ibid.
5. I Sam. 16:1-13; 17. From Biography of Samuel
6. I Sam. 16:14-23 - From the History of the Introduction of the Monarchy
7. I Sam. 16:7
8. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 391 f.

Most novel and far-reaching of Samuel's achievements, however, was that of laying hold of the essentially un-Hebrew movement of ecstatic prophecy and turning it to the service of Israel's religion and Israel's God.[1] The incident recorded reveals Samuel as independent of the prophetic bonds, yet in psychic sympathy with them, and perhaps exercising a directive influence through them. Having anointed the 'unawakened giant', young Saul, he sends him forth to receive a new heart from Yahweh, and to be further confirmed in purpose by the sharing of an ecstatic experience with a band of these prophets.[2]

b. The Work of Saul.

Saul's story is written by one who shares Samuel's opinion of him, hence in the history of religion Saul serves as a 'warning case'. Endowed with zeal, courage, enthusiasm and devotion, he yet lacked deep religious fervor and perseverance in the greater causes he might have served nobly, pandering to personal ambition instead.[3] Overdrawn as the estimate seems if Saul and not Samuel were really king,[4] the religious teachings concerning disobedience to Yahweh's commands are as clear as in the day of Moses. He could not regain Samuel's friendship even by pleading for forgiveness.[5] Moreover, "Yahweh answered him

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1. As Kittel thinks. Cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 389
2. I Sam. 10: 9-11
3. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 132
4. Samuel rebukes Saul for sacrificing, I Sam. 13:8-13
5. Samuel rebukes Saul for disobedience to his command, I Sam. 15:7-23
5. I Sam. 15:24-35

not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets"[1], and doom was inevitable.

A soldier rather than a general, Saul checked the advance of the Philistines, inspired to boldness and bravery by Yahweh himself[2], as his followers believed. Even his angers or 'evil spirits' were accounted to be visitations from Yahweh, as was every exceptional emotion, physical or spiritual, in those days[3] (e.g. I Sam. 16:14). Yet as king he aroused disaffection among his people, and, as a member of the Nebhiim, he must have brought ecstatic prophecy into popular notice[4] and eventually into disrepute. Says T.H. Robinson:

> "That very ecstatic power which roused and inspired him in his earlier days, enabling him to do great and startling feats[5], unfitted him for the drudgery of organization and the slow toil of consolidating what he and his had won." [6]

The picture given of King Saul, his sanity unbalanced by melancholia[7] and jealousy[8] is at variance with his youth's fair promise. Doubtless others beside Samuel 'mourned for Saul' and were convinced that Yahweh had rejected him from being king over Israel.[9]

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1. I Sam. 28:6
2. I Sam. 11:6
3. See also I Sam. 18:10
4. I sam. 20: 23, 24
5. e.g. The rescue of Jabesh from the Ammonites, I Sam. 11:1-11
6. "History of the Hebrew and Jewish People", Abingdon Commentary, p. 64
7. I Sam. 16:14-26
8. I Sam. 18:12-16
9. cf. I Sam. 15:34

c. Early Work of David.

Like Moses, exiled in his young manhood, David pondered on the ways of Yahweh, reaching the same conclusions as to the divine power to help him, even though as a vassal of Achish purposing to fight for Judah, he led a double life. Was his allegiance likewise divided between God and gods? By his testimony Yahweh had saved him from the sword of Saul.[1] Yahweh had even delivered Saul into his hands,[2] yet had kept him from laying hands on his anointed one. Either Yahweh or ill-disposed men had banished David from Yahweh's territory; if Yahweh, he had some inscrutable and arbitrary purpose to serve; let him 'smell a sacrifice' and be appeased! But if men had done it, they deserved a curse for compelling him to serve other gods.[3]

We infer that, in their territory, David worshiped the Philistine gods, yet when Ziklag was despoiled and his enraged followers would have stoned him, David escaped death by strengthening himself in Yahweh his God.[4] As king of Judah and Israel, though still a Philistine vassal, David becomes a champion of Yahweh. His biographer dwells on his preparation to enter battle - not rashly, as Saul had often acted, but forearmed by oracular assurance of victory:

> "So David asked the Eternal, 'Shall I attack the Philistines? Wilt thou put them into my hands?' The Eternal said to David, 'Attack them, I will

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1. cf. I Sam. 26:24
2. cf. I sam. 26:10
3. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 395 f.
4. I Sam. 30:6

> 'certainly put the Philistines into your hands'. Then David ... broke them. 'The Eternal has broken my foes down before me like water bursting a dam!' said David, while carrying off their abandoned gods, his thoughts doubtless leaping toward the Ark he would reclaim." [1]

Another consultation, and Yahweh was to give the signal for attack, by tree-divination common to the ancients.

> "Whenever you hear a sound of movement among the balsam trees, be quick, and attack, for the Eternal will have gone in front of you to rout the Philistine army." [2]

> "Wherever David went, the Eternal gave him victory". [3]

The sins of Saul, like his bones, had not been finally buried. [4] His violation of Joshua's covenant by the massacre of Gibeonites was yet to be avenged. Accordingly, Yahweh sent a three-year famine upon Israel and David, discovering by oracle the cause of the divine displeasure, delivered up the seven sons of Saul to be hanged unto the Lord, as demanded by the Gibeonites. Says Micklem:

> "S.A.Cook speaks of 'the purification of the Gibeonites', here, and rightly, but the point of the story is much more 'the pacification of God' for we have to do with human sacrifice to avert the anger of God. ... When 'atonement', i.e., expiation or satisfaction, had been made ... God put away his anger and sent rain." [5]

Ultimately the seven bodies and those of Saul and Jonathan receive proper burial, and their spirits find rest in Sheol. [6]

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1. II Sam. 5:19-21, after Moffatt
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. cf. Josh. 9:15
5. Op. cit., p. 409
6. Ibid., p. 410

> "So David became greater and greater, for the Eternal, God of hosts, was on his side. ... He realized that the Eternal had set him to be king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel." 1

Meanwhile the Ark, "shrine of Yahweh Zebaoth, the war-God who had nothing to do with the cultivating of the soil or the training of vines"[2], remained in Philistine territory. Yahweh's seat was still popularly thought to be on Horeb-Sinai. Yet the gradual subjugation of the Canaanites, and the signal proof of Yahweh's might afforded by David's victories, naturally lowered the prestige of Baal, while new sanctuaries dedicated to Yahweh exclusively, strengthened the idea that he personally dwelt in Canaan. By a next step he occupied former Canaanite sacred places, thereby taking possession of the property and functions of Baal.[3]

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1. II Sam. 6:10, after Moffatt
2. Kautzsch, E.: "Religion of Israel", A Dictionary of the Bible, by Jas. Hastings, p. 646
3. cf. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD IN ISRAEL FROM 1000 B.C. TO THE TIME OF AMOS

A. Sources for Religious Ideas

1. Songs of David and Solomon

David was a conservative, reviving Moses' conceptions of God. Therefore, 'in the day that Yahweh delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies', he voiced his thanksgiving by recalling a theophany:

a. David's Psalm of Praise:

"The Eternal is to be praised! - I call to him,
and I am rescued from my foes.
For waves of death broke round me,
floods of destruction burst on me,
deadly nets entangled me
and fatal snares surprised me.
I called to the Eternal in my plight,
called to my God for aid;
he in his palace heard my voice,
my cry came to his ears.
The earth was swaying, quaking,
heaven's very bases shook and swayed,
before his anger;
smoke fumed from his nostrils,
and scorching fire from his lips,
that kindled blazing coal,
as down he came on the bending sky,
the storm-cloud at his feet.
* * * *
The Eternal is living - blest be my Might,
exalted be my strong God of victory! -
God who lets me enjoy my vengeance,
crushing the nations under me,
succouring me from my foes." 1

b. David's Last Words. As a national ruler, David was both strong and gracious, enlisting the affectionate obedience of his subjects. As a father he was weak, failing to discipline his handsome, scapegrace sons. Does his last poem suggest a faulty philosophy in the effort he doubtless made continually to rule righteously, as in

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1. II Sam. 22, after Moffatt

God's fear, while blindly trusting to the covenant to preserve his line of descent upon the throne of Israel?

"Thus saith David the son of Jesse
Thus saith the man upraised on high ...
Jacob's God said to me,
Israel's Rock spake:

He that ruleth men righteously
Who reigneth in God's fear,
He shineth like the morning light,
Like the sun on a cloudless morn,

Which maketh the green earth resplendent
after rain.
But the godless are as wild thistles ...
They are fuel for the fire.

Surely my house is not so with God;
He ordereth and sustaineth it;
For an everlasting covenant hath he made
with me,
In him is all my salvation and joy." 1

c. Solomon's Song of Dedication:

"Yahweh has set his sun in the firmament but declared He Himself would dwell in deep darkness. I have built now for Thee a lofty abode, a place for Thy dwelling forever." 2

Solomon here gives expression to two essential elements in the new situation that the temple has created, namely, Yahweh now finds a permanent resting place in contrast with his former nomadic roaming; and he now dwells in the secrecy of the darkness of his new home.[3]

2. Prophetic blessings and oracles — The institution of a royal and national government necessitated the keeping of records by the royal scribe and the king's "remembrancer".[4]

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1. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 410, Ref. II Sam. 23:1-7
2. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 18, Ref. I Ki. 8:12 f.
3. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 155 f.
4. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 43

Moreover, the career of David stimulated the beginning of historical literature.[1] The fulfillment of ancient traditional words of prophecy became a favorite theme.

a. The Song of Hannah.[2] The childhood of Samuel escaped the first historian, but a later writer introduces David by means of the story of Samuel, who is represented as the son of his mother's vows. Both the setting and the song, as here given, belong to this later period. Says Micklem:

> "We see the simple piety of early days in Israel, the annual pilgrimage to Shiloh where the Ark was housed, the sacrifice there and the feast, the whole compared by Bennett to a Christmas and a Christmas dinner away from home. After dinner Hannah went into the sanctuary sadly to pray before the Real Presence represented by the Ark ... She leaves the sanctuary cheerful with the old priest's blessing. Much is implied of real understanding and affection between husband and wife; there is simple faith in the prayer-hearing God." 4

Significant lines of Hannah's Song point to the Magnificat of Mary, mother of Jesus:[5]

> "My heart exulteth in Yahweh ...
> My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;
> Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
> There is none holy as Yahweh ...
> Talk no more so exceeding proudly
> For Yahweh is a God of knowledge
> And by him actions are weighed.
> The bows of the mighty men are broken;
> And they that stumbled are girded with strength ...
> Yea, the barren hath borne seven;
> And she that hath many children languisheth...
> Yahweh maketh poor, and maketh rich:
> He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.
> He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
> He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,

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1. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 21
2. I Sam. 2:1-10
3. M, who wrote during Solomon's reign
4. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 384
5. Luke 1:46 f.

To make them sit with princes
And inherit the throne of glory:
For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's
And he hath set the world upon them ...
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth;
And he will give strength unto his king!"

True, the mother of Samuel might fittingly thank Yahweh for her 'salvation', i.e., deliverance from the shame of barrenness.[1] On the other hand, the theme is national rather than personal; the 'throne of glory' to which Yahweh has exalted lowly persons, while humiliating the lofty, is not the throne of motherhood but of kingship. This tribute to Yahweh's justice and righteousness smacks of the celebration of national successes,[2] probably before the time when love of power and display had caused David and his successors to forget their humble origin and the ideals of their people.[3]

b. The Blessing of Moses.[4] A summary of tribal history, this Blessing of independent origin - perhaps from different times and different places - follows the form of the Blessing of Jacob. But actual characteristics of the different tribes now give place to an ideal glorification of them. Both separately and collectively they are shown as exercising theocratic functions and enjoying theocratic privileges.[5] Their righteousness, too, is confused at times with material prosperity.

In the exordium, the theophany of the lawgiving Yahweh has a new note:

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1. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 384
2. cf. Driver, S.R.: Intro. to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 174
3. cf. Bailey and Kent: History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, p. 107
4. Deut. 33
5. cf. Driver, S.R.: Op. cit., p. 97 f.

"Yea, he hath love for his people;
His consecrated are in his hand."

The salient features of eleven tribes are noted. Judah, who in Jacob's Blessing was designated "a lion's whelp" destined to reign, is now in distress; yet relief is at hand: "A help from his enemies shalt Yahweh be". Benjamin, now with the Temple 'between his shoulders' affords dwelling for Yahweh, who 'ever broodeth over him'. Zebulun and Issachar, on their seaboard "offer sacrifices of righteousness, For they suck the abundance of the seas". Gad, as a lion tearing arm and scalp, brings a trophy of heads: "Thus he wrought the righteousness of Jehovah". Joseph, greatest in wealth, is again hailed as the prince among his brethren, while Levi is most favored, suggesting that the author or collector of this Blessing may have been a member of this tribe.[1] Thus to Levi:

"Thy Thummin and Urim be to thy pious one ...
Who (sacrificing all family love) keep thy saying
And thy covenant they guard.
They show thy judgment to Israel,
They set incense in thy nostril
And whole offerings on thine altar ...
Bless thou his strength O, Jehovah ...
Smite in the loins those that rise up against him."

The epilogue becomes a burst of grateful enthusiasm for Yahweh:

"There is none like the God of Jeshurin,
Riding the heavens as thy help,
And in his pride through the skies.
The God of old is a dwelling-place
And underneath are the everlasting arms.

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1. cf. Scott, D.R.: "Deuteronomy", Abingdon Commentary p. 343

> And he drove out the enemy before thee,
> And said, 'Destroy!'
> So Israel dwelt securely
> The fountain of Jacob alone,
> Upon a land of corn and wine;
> Yea, his heavens drop dew.
> Oh, happy art thou, O israel, who is
> like thee?
> A people delivered by Jehovah,
> The shield of thy help,
> The sword of thy pride.
> So shall thine enemies feign and fawn
> before thee;
> But thou on their heights shall trample them."[1]

Here again arises the theme of the Oracles of Balaam, which were probably produced during this period.[2] The absence of Jacob's curses is very marked; here no blame is ascribed to any.

c. The Parable of Nathan.[3] But the literature of the period did not pass over all moral failures. The sin of David meets rebuke not in the modern catalogue of lust, adultery, murder and bigamy, but as covetousness leading to murder. Says Bewer:

> "Who can forget the rich man who had so many flocks and herds and who nevertheless rudely seized the one little ewe lamb of his poor neighbor that was as dear to him as a daughter, when a guest came whom he had to entertain? Who is not startled by the terrible application 'thou art the man!' that Nathan thundered into David's ears?" 4

In a period before the inexorable rule of natural law was known, Nathan virtually declared that sin works like a poison issuing in death. Even the king cannot escape,

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1. A new translation, given by Scott, D.R.: Op. cit., p. 343 f.
2. Page 89 of this paper
3. II Sam. 12:1-4
4. Op. cit., p. 18

though with David's repentance, the poison of sin is taken out of his system and put into the child's.[1]

It is David's repentance, however, that makes the incident immortal. Oriental monarchs had liberty to take into their harems whomever they would, yet David recognized and confessed that in taking Bathsheba, he sinned. "For such conduct was intolerable to Israel's God, and Israel's God alone; it was a crime against God".[2] To be sure, repentance did not involve separation from Bathsheba; she remained his favorite wife. Yet the lesson learned by David had its place in the discipline of Israel, and Nathan's parable is accounted one of the finest poems in prose that has come down to us from antiquity.[3]

d. The Benjamite Battle-Cry.[4] In David's old age, tribal jealousy incited Sheba, a bold, embittered Banjamite, to resist the leadership of Judah. Rather, in his opinion, should the tribes all forsake their allegiance to King David, and resume their tribal independence! Blowing the trumpet, he calls:

> "We have no portion in David,
> nor have we heritage in Jesse's son!
> Every man to his tents, O Israel." 5

A half-century later, the oppression incident to maintaining Solomon's splendid capital and court aroused Rehoboam's subjects to plead for justice. His reply, "My father lashed

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1. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 403
2. Ibid., Ref. II Sam. 12:9
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 18
4. II Sam. 20:1
5. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 16

you with scourges, but I will lash you with scorpions", suddenly awakens a long-quivering echo, and the ten tribes rise in revolt, crying:

"What portion have we in David?
Neither have we inheritance in the
son of Jesse:
To your tents, O Israel: [1]
Now see to your own house, David!"

3. Covenants with Yahweh

By ascribing all Israel's basic legal documents to Moses, thereby obliterating other origins, our sources have long obscured the gradual growth of Israel's convictions.[2] For convictions must precede the formulation of laws, and in a people at once so democratic and so dependent upon older codes for patterns, Israel's codes represent either a slavish copying of those of her neighbors, or an originality born of convictions both profound and widespread. An investigation of her Covenant Code and the various versions of her decalogue reveals the progressive development of these instruments.

a. The Code of the Covenant.[3] This code was incorporated in the E Document which came at the close of the period covered in this chapter. Written as it was in a book and not on tables of stone, and wholly separate from the Decalogue,[4] it represents the highest codification reached within the limit of this paper. By the time these were written the decisions of Moses had been expanded into

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1. I Ki.12:16
2. cf. Pfeiffer, R.H.: Op. cit., p. 309
3. Ex. 20:23-23:19
4. cf. Pfeiffer, R.H.: Op. cit., p. 296

Israel's first civil laws under Canaanite influence so that the code of Hammurabi, their teacher, was now reflected throughout even the religious laws of Israel. "The Covenant Code was taken over bodily from the Canaanites", says Pfeiffer.[1] Originality finds expression in the following four laws:

1. Ye shall not make other gods with Me; gods of silver, or gods of gold ye shall not make to you.

2. An altar of earth thou shalt make for Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon. ... And if thou make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones. ... Neither shalt thou go up by steps to Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not uncovered thereon.

3. He that sacrifices to any god, except to Yahweh only, shall be banned.

4. Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.[2]

Bewer thinks the law condemning image worship may have originated as a protest against the golden bulls which Jeroboam made, and the law of the primitive altar against the artificial altars in Solomon's temple.[3] "The command not to hew or pollute the rock altar by a blow with an iron tool," says Kent, "reflects unconsciously the old belief that the spirit of the deity resided in the rock on which the sacrifice was offered."[4] "The law of the altar", adds Bewer, "is of fundamental importance. The local sanctuaries, the 'high places' of Canaanitish worship, were to witness a

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1. cf. Op. cit., p. 296
2. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., 38 f.
3. cf. Ibid., p. 41
4. Founders and Rulers, p. 222

great transcendence of religious thought and feeling, as the exponents of a pure God demanded here upon his adopted altars a worship unpolluted, and pollution in its several aspects became more and more abhorrent."[1]

b. The J Decalogue.[2] Here the oldest Decalogue[3] receives an additional two commandments, placed as first and second:

"Thou shalt worship no other god".

"Thou shalt make unto thee no molten image".

Assuming, with Pfeiffer, that the oldest decalogue represents Canaanitish thought, while the classic decalogue is a compendium of prophetic teaching composed long after J,[4] we consider that this decalogue was developed during the interval between them.

Picture the oldest decalogue in the hands of a formalist to whom meticulous observance of feasts and sacrifices are still more essential than any possible humanitarian injunctions to honor father and mother, to leave off murder, adultery, theft, false witness and covetousness, yet who discovers "a distressing and culpable omission"[5]. Monalatry and imageless worship, which have become to his thinking the very cornerstones of his religious system, are not here enjoined! If, now the Covenant Code, such as is given by E, is within reach, our redactor can easily, on that

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1. Op. cit., p. 42
2. Ex. 34.
3. Ex. 23:12-19, p. 108 of this paper
4. cf. Op. cit., p. 298
5. Ibid., p. 303

authority, formulate the two desired commandments. Is this redactor J? If so, his formulations fall within the scope of this paper. But if, as is indicated, he represents 'incipient Judaism' his formulations belong to a later period. We can only find answer to this question by a consideration of the conceptions held by the people of the period, for a valid exegesis will find support only in conduct. Characteristic attitudes, as revealed in the history of the people, are therefore, next reviewed.

B. Inferences from Popular Practice

1. Leaders As a part of the program of building a great nation, David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and Solomon in turn erected a magnificent Temple in which to house it. Intended as a royal chapel only, this Temple became in time a central sanctuary that expressed the unity of the people in worship, and led ultimately to the exaltation of Yahweh, first as God of Israel and later as God of the universe.[1]

In contrast with this far-reaching conception, however, the thought of Israel's leaders comprehended a God whose attributes only rarely exalted him above their own narrow and provincial practices.

a. David and Solomon. As the sources show, David found Yahweh exceedingly arbitrary at times. Not only could he send famine upon Israel to avenge a by-gone sin of a former king, but he could slay a man in whose house the Ark

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1. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 159 f.

had rested for years, for endeavoring to steady it on a rough road.[1] Or he could send a pestilence to destroy thousands because their king had taken a census,[2] even at his own command.[3] David's religion, conventional though it was, sometimes broke with religious decorum. To express his joy when the Ark reached Jerusalem, he indulged in a dervish-like whirling dance before it[4] - a processional dance 'rich in emotional color but poor in intellectual content'[5], nor would he suffer rebuke on the plea for respectability in religion, or perhaps for the principle that religious custom must advance with the advance of civilization.[6] Again, he refused to indulge in ceremonial mourning for his child by Bathsheba, his genuine sorrow having been known before the death occurred.

David's love for Yahweh and his people left little place in his heart for pride and tyranny.[7] His faith in Yahweh's presence, regardless of convention or current superstition, is revealed in a sudden dark hour in his later life. Driven from his capitol by Absolom, would-be usurper of his throne, he found the Ark being carried along in his train, for his protection. Promptly he sent it back, declaring virtually that if God were with him, he needed not the symbol of the divine presence, but if God were not with

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1. cf. II Sam. 6:6
2. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 147
3. cf. II Sam. 24:1
4. cf. II Sam. 6:21
5. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 401
6. Ibid.
7. cf. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers, p. 181

him, the symbol could not help him.[1] This marks a distinct advance in religious thought.[2]

Solomon's thoughts of God are far to seek since his original writings are not yet confirmed by scholars. Later generations point to the Temple as his one eventually-positive contribution to their religion. Otherwise, engaged in enterprises of building and administration gigantic for little Israel, he introduced his subjects to the brilliant material civilization of the day;[3] but this tended to defeat the cause of Yahweh in the land. For although the common people doubtless gloried in the splendors of his magnificent capitol and court, they winced under the forced labor and over-taxation,[4] the price of grandeur achieved all too rapidly, and they resented the oppression though it seemed to have religious sanction. Was not their king and tyrant Yahweh's chief representative among them, officiating at the sacrifices and enjoying divine favors continually? Centuries later, Judaism could acknowledge its debt to Solomon's passion for building with its resultant ideal of Temple worship,[5] but his own generation could not do so.

Of great significance too, were the foreign marriages by which he sought to strengthen international ties. Could these queens have come to Jerusalem, divorced from their own national gods, this folly of Solomon's might

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1. cf. II Sam. 15
2. cf. Micklem, N.: Op. cit., p. 406
3. cf. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers, p. 207
4. cf. Ibid.
5. cf. Simpson, D.C.: "First and Second Kings", Abingdon Commentary, p. 416

have escaped the records, whereas it proves the climax of his revolutionizing policy. The atmosphere of chastity and austerity which characterized Yahweh gave place to that of the Oriental harem with its luxuries and intrigues[1]; and gradually the wives by their pagan worship 'turned away his heart' from the God he still outwardly worshiped. Meanwhile the Sidonian Ashteroth, the Ammonite Milcom, Chemosh of Moab and Molech of Ammon became established on their high places fronting Jerusalem and the holy of holies of the High Presence within the Temple. It was an affront indeed, sensed only by later leaders, that Solomon could without compunction build temples to Yahweh's rivals in Yahweh's own domain!

b. The Dynasty of Omri. Unwarned by Solomon's defection, a later statesman of the Northern Kingdom, blind to the religious and conservative instincts of his subjects, cements a treaty by the marriage of his son to a pagan princess: Ahab marries Jezebel, daughter of Ittobaal, king of Tyre, also priest of the Tyrian male and female deities, Baal-Melkart and Ashtarte.[2] Jezebel is a religious zealot, therefore Ahab erects temples to these deities in his capitol city of Samaria and Jezebel proceeds to displace the worship of Yahweh with the alluring and seductive worship of her gods,[3] new in name, yet as attractive in its ceremonials and in its appeals to elementary human passions as was the sexual cult[4]

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1. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 156
2. cf. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 425
3. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 170
4. cf. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers, p. 224

of Baal.- In time Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, marries King Jehoram of Judah, cementing the long-desired alliance of the brother-kingdoms, and she establishes the worship of Baal-Melkart with temple, altars, images and priests[1] in the very heart of Judah, the more conservative kingdom.

c. Reformers in the Southern Kingdom. In Judah, the swing of the pendulum between Yahweh worship and that of other gods followed the encouragement given by Solomon's successors to the one or to the other. Thus the great grandson Asa became an iconoclastic reformer, removing the idols his fathers had made; also he removed Maacah his mother from being queen because she had made am abominable image for an Asherah, and he cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kedron.[2] His son Jehoshaphat completed the task of expelling the temple-prostitutes from the land but his son Jehoram married Athaliah, inaugurating the reign of Melkart in Judah. Her grandson Joash, escaping her sword, repaired the temple, yet met a violent death at the hands of his military party for buying off an attack from the Syrian king with a gift of Temple vessels of gold and silver. His son Amaziah, avenging this assassination, voiced a new social principle..."The children shall not be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin".[3]

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1. II Ki. 11:18
2. I Ki. 15:12,13
3. II Ki. 14:6 b.

The period ends during Uzziah's reign of great national prosperity and moral decline. The Temple at Jerusalem had thus far failed to exercise a strong influence in favor of the higher morality.[1]

d. Leaders in the Northern Kingdom. The ten revolting tribes had in their first king a strong social emancipator.[2] Jeroboam's championship of their rights had in the end paved the way to this throne. His achievements are summarized by Simpson as follows:

> "He gave his subjects exactly what their conservative presuppositions demanded - sanctuaries of their own - two maintained at the royal expense - an ancient method of representing Jehovah as the god of physical force, a bull,[3] a professional priesthood ... and a harvest festival ..." [4]

Here the bull-symbol suggested a sexual element in the cult,[5] and this fact, together with other influences inherent in the fertile soil, the opportunities for trade and commerce, the challenge to international politics which this kingdom so freely provided, brought about in time the complete Baalization of Yahweh in his more extensive domain.

Little development of religious thought, or of social or moral ideals is traceable here.[6] "Reigns of terror" blot the pages of Israel's history while four dynasties and lesser claimants rise and flourish, then suffer extermination. The religious and social conceptions of Jeroboam's

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1. cf. Oesterley and Robinson, Op. cit., p. 181
2. I Ki. 11:26
3. cf. Ex. 32:1-6
4. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 424
5. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 180 f.
6. Perhaps partly because our records were collected or edited at a period when worship at Bethel was held to be an act of apostasy. Ibid., p. 180

chief successors may be briefly stated:

Omri, "the David of the Northern Kingdom"[1] in warlike energy and statesmanship planted his capitol at Samaria, yet left no abiding stimulus to religious idealism.

Ahab worshiped Yahweh, but introduced Tyrian religion. In taking Naboth's vineyard he repeated David's sin of covetousness and murder, violating the Hebrew sense of justice.

Jehu, keen to restore conservative Yahweh-worship, attempted to stamp out Baal-worship by slaughtering the worshipers, as enemies of Yahweh, in "the first systematic religious persecution"[2].

Jeroboam II. great-grandson of Jehu inaugurated a period of great national and political prosperity which resulted in a most disastrous lowering of the religious and moral tone of society and in economic conditions irksome to the poor.[3]

Simultaneously the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel reached their high water-mark of national and political prosperity, unsurpassed even by that of David and Solomon,[4] under Azariah (Uzziah) in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel. But it was a time of material upbuilding and social corruption presaging the gravest dangers to political and religious life.

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1. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 167
2. Ibid., p. 172
3. cf. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 433
4. cif. Ibid.

As for the leading sanctuary - at Bethel - it seems clear that it contributed even less, if possible, than Jerusalem to a high moral and social standard.[1] Yahweh was not the true Yahweh at all but only Baal under another name. The type of religion was a syncretism in which the later superimposed religion had no part except in the name of the deity worshiped.[2]

2. Populace "The establishment of the monarchy proved in a certain sense to be the victory of Yahwism."[3] Israel's one God had shown by his prowess and his gifts that the land belonged to him. Within the bounds of Israel he was to be worshiped, just as every other god must be recognized and duly cultivated in his own sphere. Yet, Yahwism had so changed in theory and in practice that Moses would have failed to recognize in the popular worship of Israel between Solomon and Ahab the faith which had inspired them in the wilderness.[4] For popular religious practices included three great agricultural festivals and exorbitant sacrifices, all of Canaanitish origin. Canaanitish too, were the structural plans of the buildings for worship and even the manner of approaching Yahweh. In his new character of fertility-God El had become Baal, though called Yahweh, and the resultant Yahwism was in no sense pure.[5]

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1. cf Oesterley and Robinson, Op. cit., p. 180
2. Ibid., p. 181
3. Ibid., p. 175
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 176

Again, whenever cults other than the pure worship of Yahweh were favored by royalty popular religion naturally took on the color of the new cult. Old superstitions, popular forms of Yahweh-religion, the recrudescence of Canaanitish Baalism were all encouraged; in what relative proportions we cannot learn, yet all were now opposing themselves to the higher and purer forms of Yahweh-worship.[1] At the rebuilding of Jericho even child sacrifice was revived.[2] Says Simpson:

> "Whether or not the policy of the court and popular feeling favored Canaanite Baalism or a fused Jehovah-Baal religion or the Tyrian religion, they were moving definitely toward the position that, though on the one hand, Jehovah was war God, the control of nature, on the other hand, including the bestowal of her gifts, and the increase of human, animal and vegetable life, was vested in gods other than Jehovah. The ethical and moral claims of Jehovah were put to one side and forgotten". 3

Ethical claims of Yahweh involved the democratic ideal, dear to the Hebrew heart. As slaves together they had rebelled against Pharoah, as freemen together they trod the wilderness and entered Canaan. Later, under David they renounced tribal jealousies in recognition of the bond of common race, ideals and religion.[4] But under Solomon, changes both glittering and bewildering took place. It was not only that the magnificence of his capitol and court threw into sharp contrast their own poor houses of mud or

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1. cf. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 426
2. I Ki. 16:34
3. Op. cit., p. 426
4. cf. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers, p. 181 f.

stone; the domination of a warm-hearted king and 'brother' had given place to the domineering of a cold master, dwelling aloof in splendor. Says Kent: "

> "There is no evidence that Solomon sought to improve the material condition of his subjects. Instead, he so completely absorbed their wealth and energies in his own building enterprises that little time was left for the development of their personal and private interests." [1]

Class-consciousness, new and hateful to the Hebrew, was born and grew apace.[2] Even the king's interest in law and justice in the courts could not offset his personal influence as grand monarch. Moreover, as a priest officiating at the sacrifices and enjoying the favor of Yahweh who dwelt in the Temple beside his palace, his position as oppressor was further strengthened. Later kings of great political and national ambition were wont to continue Solomon's undemocratic policies. Therefore though the kings ruled under covenant with the people, and no development of a noble order can be traced,[3] it came about that during periods of great national prosperity, the rich became richer and the poor, poorer.

How far did the Temple exercise restraint upon the development of class-spirit? For two reasons it rather fostered it: As a royal chapel for the use of the court and the growing army of public officials,[4] it offered little

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1. cf. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers, p. 207
2. cf. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 158
3. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 183
4. cf. Kent, C.F.: Founders and Rulers, p. 198

invitation to the common people, while as "a reminder of their own indentured and unwilling labor, its symbolism the evidence of Solomon's foreign and therefore unpatriotic proclivities"[1], it repelled not only the Northern tribes but the entire generation which erected it. Moreover, the idea of a central sanctuary did not arise until much nearer the reign of Josiah. Meanwhile the people worshiped at the old high places taken over from Baal, where with the ebb and flow of other religions and superstitions the moral tone of Yahwism continued to decline.

But there were those among the children of Jacob who believed that Yahweh, unlike Chemosh and other national deities, had an existence independent of his people. "Chemosh had always been a Moabite", whereas Yahweh had existed before Israel, and could probably exist without Israel at all. These philosophers, from among the humblest people, could foresee a time when Israel would cease to exist unless she should give heed to the moral demands of her God. To them he was too pure to accept their polluted worship.

It follows that the dating of documents which mark the real advance of Israel's thought of God was not determined by her political leaders, nor by the majority of her populace, but by a minority of humble persons, great only in their sublime convictions.

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1. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 424

C. Evidences from Early Prophetic Sources

While the tribes who had crossed the Jordan were thus developing into agricultural and commercial nationhood, those who had elected to remain in the rich grazing country of Ammon and Gilead,[1] together with those inhabiting the grazing country in the south of Judah, constituted another Israel in their religious and patriotic conservatism. Worshiping the common deity and owing allegiance to the Hebrew kings, they yet preserved the ancient traditions, outlook, and mode of worship. From this element in the population came the first protest against that declension from primitive Yahwist principles which marked the syncretism of agricultural Palestine.[2]

1. Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah

In shepherd's garb, appearing abruptly before King Ahab with rebuke and command, Elijah of Gilead, champion of the God of Moses and of Israel's earlier faith,[3] is characterized by intense feeling, courage and fiery enthusiasm, combined with a lack of compassion. His first appeal is virtually this:

> If Yahweh be God, follow him - follow him only
> He is a jealous God, and the only God for Israel.

Ahab can not accede to this demand, involving as it does the setting aside of powerful foreign alliance, and of his own queen Jezebel, together with the Tyrian gods. Then Elijah declares:

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1. Num. 32
2. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 182 f.
3. cf. Kent, C.F.: The Kings and Prophets of Israel, p. 26

> "As Yahweh, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." [1]

In the third year of the famine, which Melkart and Ashtarte had evidently failed to break, Elijah again appears before the unrepentant Ahab, to make a public appeal to the conscience of the people. The trial of creeds on Mount Carmel vindicates both Elijah's mockery of the ineffective ritual, ceremonial and gods of his opponents, and also his own faith in Yahweh as nature's God, alike as an earth-deity and a sky-god.[2] "Yahweh alone is to be worshiped in Israel! But not only because he is Israel's God, but because He alone is real, because He alone demonstrates His reality by His activity."[3] Thus Elijah passes beyond Moses on the way to monotheism.[4] Moreover, the slaughter of the prophets - sacrosanct in any religion - further proclaims Melkart's helplessness to resent or to avenge.[5] No questions of Yahweh's transcendency in higher spheres or of his sole creatorship having yet occurred to either party, Elijah announces the coming of rain and leaves the field completely triumphant, only to be thrown into terror by Jezebel's threat to avenge the murder of the prophets of Melkart.

In utter despair he flees in search of Yahweh - not to the Temple in Jerusalem, but, characteristically to

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1. I Ki. 17:1
2. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., 426
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 47
4. cf. Ibid., p. 48
5. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 188

Mount Horeb, where a new revelation of Yahweh's methods comes to him. Nature's God of moral demands speaks first in wind, in earthquake and in fire - but with challenging emphasis at last, in the sound of a light whisper, thus confirming Elijah's growing conviction that even the spectacular demonstration of power on Mount Carmel, and his passionate use of the sword, could avail less in winning back the people than would quiet thought in which Yahweh might speak to the individual conscience and give insight and illumination as to Moses and to Elijah himself.

Yet it is too early to expect the conversion of Yahweh's enemies. The Israelites who have yet hesitated to bow the knee to Baal would be saved by such appeal to conscience; while on the other hand, the apostates might suffer extermination together with the foreign propagandists, in the campaign which Elijah had actually inaugurated. Those who in the end should suffer death would pay the price of loyalty to Yahweh, otherwise known as treason![1] To carry on the work under the new plan required a man of the people,[2] a popular counsellor and diplomat, and Elisha was chosen. Moreover, the God of history is not restricted to Hebrew territory in which to work out his own purposes. A foreign king might well begin the task of slaughter, thinking to serve his own ends. A new and revolutionary king in Israel could complete the task, with Elisha's assistance.

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1. cf. Kent, C.F.: Kings and Prophets, p. 50
2. Ibid., p. 28

In a fourth scene Elijah arraigns King Ahab for the double crime of covetousness and murder to gain possession of Naboth's vineyard. Israel's God is a protector of the rights of the common man as over against the royal rights claimed by kings under other gods - "a God who is ethical and moral in his own attributes, demanding ethical and moral ideals and conduct in his worshipers and yet extending his loving compassion even to Ahab when at last repentant."[1] In the end, Elijah, 'a man of iron'[2], discloses human sympathy in giving a message of mercy to the wretched king.[3]

Elijah thus became "the great informing spirit of his age"[4] - "the forerunner of the great social reformers who defined religion not merely in terms of ritual and belief but also in terms of justice and mercy."[5] Little wonder that later Judaism, at times when apostasy and injustice became intrenched under the shadow of a throne or of a sanctuary, looked for the return of Elijah.[6]

Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah and the quieter aspects of his program, conducting a campaign of education and friendly counsel, moving freely among the people, training disciples, and strengthening everywhere the sentiment against Baalism and the house of Ahab. In

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1. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 428
2. Kent, C.F.: Kings and Prophets, p. 28
3. cf. I Ki. 21:27-29
4. Kent, C.F.: Kings and Prophets, p. 30
5. Ibid., p. 29
6. Ibid.

simple helpfulness to the people he shows himself a medium of Yahweh's power, notably so in two miracles which anticipate those recorded in the gospels: (1) he feeds a multitude with a few loaves[1]; (2) he heals the leper, Naaman[2]. In the latter instance the henotheistic ideal shines forth: Yahweh is to be worshiped on the soil of Israel, other gods in their own territory. Another incident brings out a most beautiful prayer, almost modern, of faith and hope on behalf of his terrified servant when the enemy's hosts surrounded the city: "Yahweh, open his eyes that he may see'. And Yahweh opened his eyes ... and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha[3]".

As a man of central Palestine, Elisha represented an element in the population which protested against the very presence and worship of any foreign god[4]. The stronger protest from the east, personified in Elijah, in time nerved his successor to action. With the full conviction that Baalism, being married to Israel and intermarried to Judah, could not be dislodged as long as the dynasty of Omri should dominate[5], yet feeling that it must be dislodged, Elisha seized the moment when King Joram, son of Ahab, had been smitten by an Aramaean foe.

The alternative is clear: the dynasty of Omri must cease to exist, so, too, Baal worshipers through-

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1. II Ki. 4:42
2. II Ki. 5
3. II Ki. 6:17
4. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 184
5. Peritz, I.J.: Op. cit., p. 171

out the land. Extermination became his watchword. By careful plotting he interviewed Hazael, greeting him mournfully as Syria's coming king, bent on harrassing Israel. The prophetic suggestion bore fruit at once in Hazael's usurpation of the Syrian throne. Elisha next sent a prophetic disciple to the army of Israel encamped against Syria, there to secretly anoint its general Jehu king in Jehoram's place and to commission him with the total destruction of the house of Ahab. Thus, conspiracy in Syria and Jehu's frightful revolution - one of the bloodiest known to Israel's history - were both instigated by Elisha in the pursuance of his highest convictions of religious and patriotic duty, under the direction of Yahweh, God of Israel.

Whether Elisha lived to renounce his policy, Jehu in time learned that persecution and the inquisitor's lash do not turn a debased kingdom from its evil ways to good ones.[1] The rival religion remained. Furthermore, he found his State weakened by civil war and extermination of the rival religionists. Help from Tyre was no longer possible, and Jehu became the vassal of Shalmaneser III of Assyria. Meanwhile, "Hazael smote them in all the borders of Israel"[2], in true poetic justice falling most heavily upon the region from the Jordan eastward, whence had sprung the "Yahwist Revival"[3].

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1. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 432
2. II Ki. 10:32,33
3. Oesterley and Robinson, Op. cit., p. 182

Elijah, though he failed to recognize the place of statesmanship, and Elisha, though he did not reach the ideal of pardoning instead of exterminating conquered offenders, were yet, for their time, exemplary prophets, men of clear convictions and unflinching loyalty to God and duty. A third exemplar of unimpeachable integrity is Micaiah, the unpopular and persecuted prophet of the court of Ahab. Though his story bears several marks of later origin, it presents, whenever written, a most admirable and fearless teller of truth as that truth was revealed to him. Of abiding worth is Micaiah's clear conception of Yahweh's unimpeachable integrity, and his own contempt for the king and for his fellow-prophets who seek to retain royal favor by predicting, in the name of Yahweh, success in the coming battle with Syria.

In a striking scene Micaiah is introduced in the presence of the allied kings of Judah and Israel. Asked to confirm the favorable prediction of four hundred other prophets of Yahweh, he declares his independent revelation from God, concluding, as he returns to imprisonment: "If thou return at all in peace, Yahweh hath not spoken by me".[1] Moreover he has explained to the kings that false prophecy, as well as true prophecy, may be inspired by Yahweh, who, on such an occasion, puts a lying spirit into the mouth of his prophets,[2] to entice, and to prevail, thus leading the victim to ruin.

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1. I Ki. 22:28
2. cf. I Ki. 22:19-23

2. Yahwist Guilds

Nazirites, Rechabites, Prophets. "To both Nazirite and Rechabite the settlement of an agricultural community was an act of apostasy, a surrender to the Baals."[1] The ancient Israelite who was devoted especially to Yahweh would use no razor,[2] and would drink no wine: therefore the Nazirite perpetuated both these customs, taking his vows, as did Samson, for life. The later Nazirite took temporary vows. Both Nazirite and Rechabite protested against wine, not as against drunkenness so much as against civilization - a more or less permanent abode being required to cultivate the vine. "To the mind of the Rechabite, the representative of the true Israel, the Aramaean nomad, must have no home on the land. ... He must be free to pull up his tent pegs and go elsewhere at the behest of his God."[3] Actually the Rechabites had not advanced beyond the belief that Baal was in control of the processes and gifts of nature: "'Do not drink the wine and you will not have to worship its giver' seems to have been their watchword".[4]

The number of Nazirites and Rechabites was probably small, yet their presence and testimony served to form a nucleus of discontent which broke into action under the stimulus of the new conditions.[5] From among them, Elijah went forth to call Israel back to its God, and in a later

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1. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 186
2. cf. Judg. 5:2 "When the long locks of Israel streamed free".
3. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 186
4. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 432
5. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 186

crisis, Jonadab ben Rechab accompanied Jehu to that feast of the adherents of Baal which they were compelled to attend to their doom[6], thus giving Rechabite approval to the policy of extermination for Baal-worshipers.

A third party, conservative yet adventurous, was that of the ecstatic prophets. As before noted, "Israel inherited both the Law and the Prophets from her predecessors in Palestine". The Canaanite belief in gods who manifest themselves in the psychic states of man[3] inspired an Israelite belief that Yahweh must manifest himself likewise; therefore Baal enthusiasts begot Yahweh enthusiasts, who in time transcended the cruder first conceptions, in keeping with the higher character of their God. Ecstatic devotees, whose wild behavior testified to their possession by Yahweh, they had, by the middle of the ninth century, attained to some kind of organized and communal life[4]. Connected with the ancient sanctuaries, such as Bethel, Gilgal and Samaria[5], they became influential in both the political and the religious life of Israel. A strong and growing party whose watchword was absolute and uncompromising loyalty to Yahweh[6], and characterized by profound passion, "in a very real sense they represented the national God, and made an irresistible appeal to the great mass of the people"[7]. These men were the devout admirers of Samuel and

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1. II Ki. 10:15-27
2. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 178
3. p. 62 of this paper
4. cf. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 184
5. cf. Kent, C.F.: Kings and Prophets, p. 48
6. cf. Ibid., p. 47
7. Oesterley and Robinson: Op. cit., p. 185

Elijah, who were never really identified with them, and of Elisha who became their leader. In Kent's thought, many of the traditional instances of the power of Elijah and Elisha to perform miracles, grew up and were transmitted within the circle of these prophetic societies.[1] Animistic belief in magic, still current among the Semites, is evident in the rites or incantations used to induce the divine power to manifest itself in certain instances. In other instances the ritual first recorded was probably deleted by later compilers. According to old-world ideas, water, therefore rain, was 'inspirited'. Elijah is said to have had the power of keeping back the rain;[2] but he could also bring rain, and in I Kings 18:42-45, where no mention is made of Yahweh, a kind of ritual is described whereby Elijah obtained rain. Both Elijah and Elisha, with magic mantle rolled up, could control the flowing Jordan. Of imitative magic there are several examples: Elisha brings the iron axe-head to the surface of the water by throwing in a piece of wood which floats, inducing the iron to do the same; while eating pottage in which a poisonous herb is discovered, Elisha throws in harmless meal; at once the herb also becomes harmless. After shooting a prophetic arrow for Joash, king of Israel, Elisha bids the king strike the ground with the arrow. This Joash does three times, and Elisha upbraids him. Now only three victories are possible; if he had struck five or six times,

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1. cf. Kings and Prophets, p. 48
2. cf. I Ki. 17:1

he might have wholly defeated the Syrians.[1] Of Elijah and Elisha it was told that each restored a dead boy to life with a ritual of laying themselves upon the dead body, mouth on mouth, eyes on eyes, hands on hands; just as the prophet is alive, so the dead boy must become living.[2] Later generations delighted in recalling these stories of magic,[3] therefore divine, power which clung to the names of popular heroes. Moreover, Yahweh is here shown to be "the sole and effective renewer of human life".[4]

Elijah's experiences during the famine further proclaim Yahweh as the sole director of nature and the sole bestower and withholder of nature's gifts in Palestine, even to non-Israelite dwellers there. Yahweh himself sends food to his servant first by ravens,[5] and later by a widow whose family suffers therefrom no lack of meal or oil.[6]

3. Prophetic Literature of the Period — Concerning Elijah, Elisha and Micaiah. The following gems of prophetic thought and experience, loved and cherished as they were during the centuries which produced them, reveal many of the highest conceptions of God which were reached during this period. Elijah's very name came to signify his field-call or battle-cry:

"Yahweh, he is God!
Yahweh, he is God!"

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1. II. Ki. 13:14-19
2. I Ki. 17:19-21 and II Ki. 4:32-35
3. For theory underlying use of magic, see p. 39 b. of this paper.
4. Simpson, D.C.: Op. cit., p. 426
5. cf. I Ki. 17:6
6. cf. I Ki. 17:12-16

With dramatic power the ancient narrator tells of the trial of creeds on Mount Carmel, here summarized:

> "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If Yahweh be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.... I, even I only am left a prophet of Yahweh; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks (for sacrifice, putting no fire under). And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Yahweh: and the God that answers by fire, let him be God. ...
> ...And they took the bullock, and they dressed it, and called upon the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, answer us! But there was no voice. ...
> ...Elijah mocked them, and said Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he is asleep and must be awaked.
> And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with swords and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them ... they raved in prophetic ecstasy until the time of the offering of the evening oblation; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.
> And Elijah said ... Come near ... And he repaired the altar of Yahweh that was thrown down ... and he made a trench about the altar ... cut the bullock in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt-offering...And he said, Do it the second time... And he said, Do it the third time ...And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water...At the time of the offering of the evening oblation, Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Yahweh, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel ... Hear me, O Yahweh, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Yahweh, art God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of Yahweh fell. ... And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: [1] and they said 'Yahweh, he is God; Yahweh, he is God."

Yahweh had triumphed. He alone is God. To Elijah the struggle between the gods was a conflict of principles between the nature religion of Baal and the moral

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1. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 46 f.

religion of Yahweh. Baal was no real God to Elijah, but he pushes that question no further. The fundamental principle of Moses has been effectively reiterated: Yahweh alone is to be worshiped in Israel.[1]

A self-revelation of Yahweh - how eagerly sought in various ways, during these decades of naive prophecy! So must Elijah's meeting with God on Horeb have thrilled his followers everywhere:

> "And behold, Yahweh passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before Yahweh; but Yahweh was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire: but Yahweh was not in the fire: and after the fire the sound of a soft stillness. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold a voice came to him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?..." [2]

Elijah's next encounter with the king bears witness to his renewed sense of mission. Ahab, coveting Naboth's vineyard has yielded to Jezebel's request to allow her to secure it for him. After the illegal trial and the stoning of Naboth, Ahab confiscates the vineyard for the crown and goes out to take possession. Suddenly appears Elijah, "the incarnate conscience of Israel, the spokesman of Yahweh":[3]

> Ahab: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"
> Elijah: "I have found thee! Hast thou killed and also taken possession? Thus saith Yahweh, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." [4]

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1. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 47
2. I Ki. (:11-13
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 49
4. Ibid.

Yahweh's demand of righteousness is absolute, it is binding on king and peasant alike.

Long years after the affair of Naboth, Jehu was riding furiously to Jezreel. Striking down his king, Joram, he said to Bidkar his adjutant:

> "Take up and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember how that, when thou and I rode together after Ahab his father, Yahweh uttered this oracle against him: Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons ... and I will requite thee in this plot, says Yahweh." [1]

Thus the God of poetic justice champions the cause of the common people.

King Ahaziah, having fallen through the window of his upper chamber sent for help to the famous healer, Baalzebub, the god of Ekron. Elijah meets the messenger, with this command,

> "Go, turn again to the king that sent you, and say to him, Thus says Yahweh, Is it because there is no God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore thou shalt not come down from the bed whither thou art gone up, but shalt surely die."

Yahweh was indeed a jealous God. Moreover, Elijah claimed for him "a unique divinity, such a divinity as could not be attributed to Baal or any other rival deity".[2]

Death to the Israelite betokened the end, and Elijah was too great to die![3] Early ideas abound in the

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1. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 58
2. Knudson, A.C.: Religious Teaching of the Old Testament,
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 51

account of his leaving earth - the prophetic mantle with its magic powers, the whirlwind as the symbol of Yahweh's presence, the translation of an outstanding saint to heaven, without his going by way of the grave or Sheol. Elijah and Elisha were walking for the last time together:

> "And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. ... And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!' [1]

Thus began Elisha's ministry in Elijah's place, by divine commission.

Micaiah, called before the kings, had declared his steadfast purpose: "As Yahweh lives, what Yahweh says to me, I will speak,

> I saw Israel scattered upon the mountains,
> as sheep that have no shepherd:
> And Yahweh said, 'These have no master, [2]
> let them return every man to his house in peace".

Most notable, however, is his defense of his oracle - independent as it is, and at variance with that of the other prophets who have been deceived:

> "Therefore hear thou the word of Yahweh: I saw Yahweh sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him...And Yahweh said, Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said on this manner; and another said on that manner. And the spirit came forth and stood before Yahweh, and said, I will entice him. And Yahweh said to him, Wherewith? And He said, I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all

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1. II Ki. 2:10-12
2. I Ki. 22:17

his prophets. And He said, Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets; and Yahweh has spoken evil concerning thee." [1]

D. Evidences from J.

In the first comprehensive history ever written, the Yahwist, or J, set the history of Israel in the frame-work of the world.[2] His mood is that of the story-teller, delighting in the human traits of his characters, yet his purpose is religious throughout. In the recounting of events from the creation until the monarchy was firmly established under David, he must, for the first long epochs, use legends woven by the poetic imagination of the people. Nearer his own time, 850 B.C., his narrative becomes a source of reliable history. But throughout, the stories, current for generations and polished from much handling,[3] yet bear the stamp of J's literary genius; better yet, they glow with the light of the high and holy purpose which joins them together, like pearls on a silken thread.

In the broad sweep of his story, interpretation keeps pace with tradition or history:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."[4] It was a golden age; men were happy and care-free. Sorrow, suffering and death, together with labor, came as the result of man's disobedience to Yahweh's. Yet the divine

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1. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 54
2. cf. Ibid., p. 69
3. Ibid., p. 71
4. Gen.1:1

favor might be gained by worthy sacrifice. Abel's gift was accepted, Cain's rejected on moral grounds. Yahweh warns Cain: "If thou doest not well, sin couches at the door"[1]. In Cain's line murder and wickedness flourished, with the advance of civilization; in Seth's line religion arose when with Enosh "men began to call upon the name of Yahweh"[2]. In time demi-gods appeared in the earth, but they only illustrate the growing sinfulness which impelled Yahweh to destroy all mankind by deluge, saving only Noah and his family, in the ark built at divine command.

After his deliverance, Noah offered burnt-offerings.

> "And Yahweh smelt the sweet savor, and Yahweh said in his heart, 'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." [3]

Ham's shameful behavior toward his father Noah next elicits Noah's curse upon Canaan, son of Ham, together with benedictions upon Shem and Japheth[4]. The theme of J's whole history now emerges; the program of the future is set in the light of Noah's curse: Canaan is to become subject to Shem (Israel) and to Japheth (Philistia).

To Abraham, as father of the chosen race, comes Yahweh's great call and promise: "Get thee out of thy country...to the land that I will show thee, and I will make

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1. Gen. 4:7
2. Gen. 4:26
3. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 62 f.
   Ref.: Gen. 8:21 f.
4. Page 87 of this paper

of thee a great nation."[1] When Abram reaches Shechem in the land of Canaan, the promise of Yahweh becomes specific: "To thy seed will I give this land"[2].

Yet this was for the far distant future. A kaleidoscope of the difficulties which rendered the promise all but unfilfillable would present: famine, compelling Abram to flee to Egypt; Sarah's beauty temptimg Pharoah; Abram giving Lot his inheritance in Canaan; Sarah's despair of bearing a son; Hagar and Ishmael sent away; Rebekah's barrenness; Jacob fleeing from Esau; Joseph sold into Egypt; famine driving Jacob into Egypt; Israel in slavery; Moses, their champion, fleeing into exile; Moses attacked by Yahweh in the wilderness; appeal to Pharoah only increases their oppressions; Pharoah in pursuit; desert-wanderings; reports from Canaan that the Canaanites are giants, their cities fortified; postponement of the conquest; exterminatiɔn of Canaanites attempted, with only partial success. These were the seeming defeats which attended the fulfillment of that promise, yet each crisis had been crowned with deliverance by Yahweh. Where the Canaanites had not been driven out they were becoming 'subject to taskwork', and thus the great prediction had been fulfilled: Canaan was Israel's slave. Moreover, the long Philistine oppression being ended, Japheth now dwelt in his own portion of Canaan's soil, and David in ruling the nations fulfilled Jacob's blessing and Balaam's oracle - the star out of Jacob had come![3]

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1. Gen. 12: 1f
2. Gen. 12:7
3. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 69 .

A distinctive feature of J's work is his quiet reinterpretation of Canaanite elements. This transforming process is described by Bewer, as follows:

> "The ancient local sanctuaries of the Canaanites were not sacred to Israel because Baal had lived ...there, but because Yahweh had appeared there to the ancestors, who thereupon had built altars there...the sacred trees were not God's dwelling place, but some were planted by Abram, and the sacred wells were dug by Isaac. The deity did not live in them, as the Canaanites thought. When Yahweh appeared to Abram at Hebron, He did not come out of the tree; nor out of the well at Beerlaharoi when he appeared to Hagar. The sacred pillars of stone were not Bethels or houses of God, but memorial or grave stones". [1]

His fellow Hebrews may well be fired by J's grand conception of Yahweh, who, from heaven his dwelling place, controls all the forces of nature and of history. This moral God who demands righteousness, rewards faith and kindness, innocence and unselfishness, and punishes wickedness and oppression, not only in Israel but in the whole earth, leaves no room for polytheism or mythology.[2] The broad survey had in fact carried J beyond his age but he could not quite eliminate every non-Israelite trace[3] nor could he always portray the grand Creator consistently as his anthropomorphisms show.[4]

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1. Op. cit., p. 71 f
2. Ibid.
3. E.g., In Eden, God jealously defeats man's hope of immortality, cf. ancient Semitic belief, p. 68 c of this paper; at Babel he fears that men united, will become too powerful for him; at the river Jabbok, Jacob wrestles with God; at the wilderness Khan God attacks Moses to kill him and is thwarted only by magic; in Eden the serpent is no longer a deity yet uncanny more than mere serpent; the marriage of angels with human women producing demi-gods as giants.
4. E.g., In Eden, God walks in the garden; at Abram's tent God visits him and eats a meal.

Yet, to discover the level of religious thinking of J's own day, we have only to search out the examples of human weakness which he so frankly, often glefully, depicts; Abram secured Sarah's release from Pharoah by telling a lie, yet retained as a gift her price in flocks and herds; Jacob obtained the birthright blessing of Isaac by deceit, and he defrauded Laban of his cattle; Lot became guilty of incest. Moreover, the finest religious convictions found within J's record, omitted here, are now attributed to the work of a later redactor.[1] Yet, after all, the worth of his undertaking can scarcely be overestimated, as marking a distinct advance in religious conceptions over those of any preceding writer.

E. Inferences from E. A century had passed since J's remarkable history had appeared. It was a century of disgraceful practices in the Northern Kingdom, following Jehu's attempt to eradicate Baal-worship. To be sure, the question of Yahweh's supremacy in Hebrew territory had been settled once for all, but Jehu's successors had turned apostate, and moral degeneracy was again stalking through the land. Under these conditions, the Elohist, or E, wrote his version of Hebrew history from Abraham to the death of Saul. It reads as if a man of Elijah's temper had decided to counteract certain fallacies in J's thinking, and to add a constructive message of his own,

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1. E.g., Jacob's prayer at the Jabbok, Gen. 32:10-13
Intercession of Moses, Num. 14:11-24
Abram's plea for Sodom, Gen. 18:17 f.
Law-giving at Sinai, Ex. 19 f.

based on certain convictions: (1) the greatness and purity of the Hebrew ancestors must be vindicated; (2) willingness to obey Yahweh to the uttermost is what he desires most of all;(3) Yahweh is testing Israel's fidelity to him - apostasy will be punished by national calamity; (4) Israel was intended as a theocracy, not a monarchy - the people have sinned in asking for a king.

To E, Yahweh-worship began with Moses. Abraham's fathers beyond the River had been idolators. Abraham, prophet though he was, worshiped El. The full revelation of God had been made to Moses, with whom alone he spoke face to face, and to whom he revealed his name Yahweh. Other special heroes who enjoyed Yahweh's favor and accomplished his purposes are Jacob, Joseph, Miriam, Joshua, the Judges, especially Gideon and Samuel.

Abraham's story is first rewritten.[1] Sarah is placed, not in Pharoah's harem, but in that of Abimelech, king of Gerar. In a dream Yahweh warns Abimelech that Sarah is Abram's wife. Abram explains that she is his half-sister. Abimelech's gift of flocks becomes simply 'a covering of the eyes to all'. Abram becomes a prophet at whose intercession Abimelech and his harem are healed. Later Abram, in sending Hagar away, does so not at the request of Sarah, but at God's direct command, and with deep sorrow at parting with Ishmael, providing bread and water for the journey. Jacob is next exonerated. His trick of stealing the birthright-benediction is justified by Esau's having sold it him for a mess of

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1. Bewer, J.A.:Op. cit., 74 f.

pottage. Rachel's conception results not from eating mandrakes, but as a token of divine favor. Jacob becomes wealthy, not by sharp practices, but by God's special blessing, to which Leah and Rachel testify.

The sacrifice of Isaac[1] is recorded by E only, to impress two lessons: Yahweh does not require human sacrifices[2], as do other gods, and Yahweh accepts, as man's best offering, his willingness to obey, at whatever cost. This second lesson receives fresh emphasis in Yahweh's rejection of Saul as king.

In the covenant at Shechem, expounded by Joshua in his farewell address, E recounts an experience lacking theophany, yet more solemn than that of Horeb-Sinai:

> "Joshua said to the people: Ye cannot serve Yahweh; for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Yahweh, and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that He has done you good. And the people said to Joshua: Nay, but we will serve Yahweh. And Joshua said ...Ye are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen you Yahweh, to serve Him..." [3]

Yet Joshua and his generation were followed by another generation which forsook Yahweh, serving Baal and the Ashteroth.

> "And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He said ...I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations that Joshua left. And they were left, to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of Yahweh...or not." [4]

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1. Gen. 22:1 f.
2. Although this is presupposed in the ancient law of Ex. 22:27
3. Josh. 24:19 f.
4. Judg. 2:20 f.

Life among the Canaanites henceforth constituted a test of fidelity; any apostasy from Yahweh would incur national calamity.[1]

To J the monarchy had been divinely ordained; to E it represented a succession of accessions and assassinations attended by misrule, apostasy and overweening ambition, so that the later century produced in its chief religious writer a convinced theocrat. E undertakes to prove that Yahweh, and no mortal man, is king of the Hebrews.[2]

His review of the Judges - true representatives of the divine King - brings into sharp contrast the hero Gideon who refused the kingship and Abimelech who aspired to it, was rebuked by his brother Jotham and died an ignominious death. With preciseness he recounts the steps whereby the monarchy was established. He pictures the childhood and work of Samuel; Israel's repeated demand that he make them a king; his solemn warnings against it, their rejection of Yahweh and of him; his laying down the theocratic office with a last warning, to which God gave applause in thunder and lightning; the frightened people imploring him to intercede for them; his promise to instruct them always in the right way; his fulfillment of this promise when the young king showed a disobedient spirit; his withdrawal from Saul; the tragic end of Israel's first king. A dark premonition for later kings cannot but be inferred.

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1. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 82
2. Ibid., p. 82 f.

E's masterpiece - the story of Joseph[1] - corroborates a theme made familiar by J. Said Joseph, the viceroy to his brothers:

> "Ye meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive...God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither but God." [2]

In this, E is thinking of Yahweh's care for an individual, as well as that of a tribe. The personal note is found again in the sacrifice of Isaac, his finest story. Individual responsibility to God, however, is a theme yet to be developed.

E shows a versatility foreign to Elijah, even unknown to J. With fine feeling, and sympathy near to tears, he pictures Abraham sending Hagar and Ishmael away, and offering Isaac on the altar. Again, he makes judicious use of keen irony and humor in his thrusts at household gods and molten images.[3] Rachel had stolen her father's teraphim, and kept them concealed by a clever ruse which, as E relates it, must provoke laughter and derision of the gods thus protected. It matters little that Rachel proves a thief and a liar; E's face is set against idolatry in all its forms. Had he not known the farce of worship ascribed to Yahweh yet given to the golden bulls at Bethel and Dan? His grand

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1. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 76
2. Gen. 45:5 f.

opportunity comes while recalling Aaron's defense of his golden calf: "They gave me their gold, and I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf"[1]. Picture the calf, coming out all by itself, and laugh with E! Nor could any such idol be really less ludicrous as a symbol of Yahweh!

To E as to J, sacred pillars, posts and trees were only memorials. God dwelt in heaven in sublime majesty more remote and transcendent than in J's conception, revealing himself no longer in person. Yet he was veiled in the pillar of cloud and of fire, symbolized by the Ark, represented by angels, and he imparted the knowledge of his will through dreams and visions[2], sometimes through magic. E lacks J's thoughts of world-vision, and of the divineness of the natural. To him God's interest is confined to Israel when he manifests himself in "special providences"[3]. E. is therefore more friendly to the priesthood, to sacrifice and to ritual. He exalts the prophetic utterances of Abraham, Moses, Miriam, the seventy Elders and Samuel. "The ideal of E is voiced by Moses:

> "Would that all Yahweh's people were prophets
> that Yahweh would put his spirit upon them." 4

F. Rise of a New Creative Movement in Prophecy

While in the Northern Kingdom E had been editing his history, Amos, a second Elijah, Rechabite in

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1. Ex. 32:24
2. E.g., Jacob's dream and vow, Gen. 28:11,12,17,20-22
3. Sarah delivered from Abimelech's harem, Gen. 20
4. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 80

spirit,[1] had been pruning fig-trees and herding flocks in the wilderness south of Jerusalem, sometimes journeying into the north country to sell animals or wool. A keen observer and a clear thinker, deeply religious, he had gone home to brood over the scenes of luxury, the cries from the oppressed in social circles and at court, the divorce from morality which Yahweh-worship revealed in the high places of Baal,[2] and with-al, over the shamelessness and arrogance of the offenders.[3] At length he appeared, suddenly, before a harvest festival in Bethel, chanting the funeral song of Israel:

> "The virgin of Israel is fallen,
> she shall no more rise,
> Prostrate she lies on the ground
> none raises her up." [4]

A most startling and absurd announcement follows: Yahweh is about to deal the death-blow to his people - Yahweh, whose very existence, in popular thought, is completely bound up with that of his people. Absurd too, is the thought of calamity in this time of great national prosperity.[5] Yet Amos' message on that day in Bethel is a classic, in the truth presented, marking the rise of a movement that inaugurated a new epoch in the development of the idea of God.

To be sure, Amos did not consider his message new. His ponderings had brought forth dark presentiments and frightful visions of destruction for Israel, together

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1. cf. Robinson, H.W.: "Amos", Abingdon Commentary, p. 775
2. cf. Ibid., p. 776
3. cf. Bewer, J.A.: Op. cit., p. 88
4. Ibid., p. 87
5. Ibid.

with the voice of Yahweh saying:

> "I am setting a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pardon them any more; ... the end is come upon my people Israel; I will smite the capitals (at the sanctuary), and I will kill with a crash all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword...I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." 1

Amos could no longer refrain from sounding their doom and calling them to repentance:

> "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live... Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph...Thus saith Yahweh 'I hate, I despise your feasts...I will not accept your burnt-offerings, your meat-offerings, nor the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs...But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream'" 2

Today we call Amos the prophet of social justice, the herald of a God of righteousness, a monotheist in all but name. Why did he not recognize the forward step he was taking?

In Amos' thought, Yahweh had been the guardian of the simple ethic in the desert; the new conditions in Canaan had not altered this function of his. In planning their destruction now he assigns no new reasons. He demands the right relation of man to man as the beginning of a right relation to himself, as he had done from time immemorial. He demands purity of worship, as known to Israel

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1. Amos 7:7; 8:2; 9:1-4
2. Amos 5:14, 15, 21, 22, 24
3. Robinson, H.W.: Amos, p. 775

since the pestilence at Baal-peor. He is a God able to enforce his demands by the events of history[1], as Israel had often experienced. Nor could Amos know that in his own keen thinking, Yahweh's personality, his omnipotence, his omnipresence, his own omniscience, his mercy and his righteousness[2] had been revealed with a clearness not before known to man.

It was given to Amos to usher in "the supreme gift of Israel to the world". For with passion and power he and his successors for centuries devoted themselves to the realization of their lofty conceptions of God so that they have contributed more than any other group of men to the permanent moralization and spiritualization of religion.[3]

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1. Robinson, H.W.: Op. cit., p. 775
2. Ibid., p. 776
3. cf. Knudson, A.C.: Beacon Lights of Prophecy, p. 1

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

Chapter I states the problem - Israel's quest for God - and the method of investigating it. From at first finding this quest a universal one, the underlying identity of thought in the Orient is recognized. By Israel's departure from her Semitic inheritance she developed genius by which to give the world its first positive religion - the faith which later crystallized into Judaism. Her one God, called Yahweh, became the luminous central figure in her religion.

Inquirers of today ask: Why did Israel set herself apart? The content of her God-consciousness made separation inevitable. Again, by what process did her conceptions develop? Reasons for belief in God are involved in these modern questions.

Under method of investigation, the sources, historical and traditional, are questioned. The Old Testament and the primitive music, drama and ritual of the people furnish evidence. A genius for religion is found to emerge. God, in her thought, dominates history; her struggle is to gain spiritual values. Archaeology furnishes literary fragments and scientific research separates originals and redactions. Two great documents only were written within the period, and these are studied, together with lesser writings. Conceptions in general include the conviction that God is a personal and living power, whose self-revelation becomes discovery as man grasps it. In particular spirit worship, or anthropomorphic polytheism, monolatry, monotheism and early prophetism come

within this paper, to be viewed critically. The method of treating conceptions includes a study of analogies of beliefs common to Israel's ancestors and neighbors. Spirit worship in Israel can be conjectured by hypothesis only. Under Moses the sole worship of Yahweh appeared, with allegiance to him making the bond of union among the people. Syncretism with Baal-worship in Canaan polluted Yahweh-worship; monolatry was recovered, and monotheism evolved with the demand that Mosaic principles be renewed. Preliterary prophets, by extolling Yahweh's personal divine attributes, inspired the thought of seeking God to do his will.

The Outline Survey of sources shows a chronological arrangement of folk-lore and tradition to 1000 B.C., and of poems and narratives from 1000 to 750 B.C.

Chapter II presents the background of religions older than that of Israel, who shared in subjective thinking to greater purpose than her kindred. The Hebrews by their fresh and virile conceptions of God became the greatest social reformers of ancient history. However, certain general features within the Semitic field have found expression in Israel. Her heritage is therefore investigated.

Motives in religion, of which self-preservation comes first, lead to placating 'powers' or making them serve the worshiper in response to rites, offerings and prayers. Spirits or souls inhabiting men, trees or rocks require food, drink, and utensils. Neglected spirits become malignant, while ancestral spirits may become clan gods. In the resulting anthropomorphic process, animism, exorcism,

witchcraft and fetishism develop. Friendships are cultivated with animals as souls, and the totem appears. In general, religion persuades but magic coerces spirits. Magic is sometimes symbolized into rites, or infallibly effective religious acts may relapse into magic. White magic of self-protection includes the productive or fertility magic of nomad life, from which sprang sanctuary prostitution or the cultic 'sacred marriage' of later farm and city life.

From hordes of spirits gods emerged - gradually becoming more human, and therefore moral. Worship and myth developed to a certain stage, then lacking progressive idealism, stagnated. The next development was to establish a hierarchy of Semitic deities to serve political ends.

By contrast, the Hebrews, under the leadership of Moses, were delivered from bondage by a unique God, and Israel's independent religion sprang up, overcoming the weakness of heathenism, by its ability to separate the ethical motives of religion from their source in nature-worship.

Tribal and national religious institutions include Clan-organizations with mother-goddesses and father-gods. When feuds sprang up between clans, the clan gods decreed religious exclusiveness. On the other hand, social and political unity of neighboring clans brought about religious syncretism. Clan gods were in all cases considered proprietors of the land occupied by their clans.

Rites and ceremonies were developed, and used to gain or recover favor of divine powers, or to ward off evil, while fertility magic linked together reproductive

processes in all nature. Prayer and praise were first used as charms potent over the gods. Petition with offerings, sacrifices of firstlings, circumcision and tabu represent persuasive measures, or perhaps fear of occult force while the building of altars and sanctuaries shows further desire to realize the presence of deity.

The office of holy persons included diviners or nature-interpreters, seers of psychic conditions, and sages. From these three orders, priests, prophets and magicians or medicine men developed.

As national deities the superhuman personality of father-god as Baal, mother-goddess as Ashtarte and king-god was extolled; their worshipers being considered their physical offspring. The father-god inspired reverence and loyalty; the king-god was expected to give help against enemies, counsel by oracle, and justice in hard cases.

The Babylonian Pantheon of patron deities, sun god, moon god and many lesser gods held sway for centuries despite some leanings toward monotheism. Worship was chiefly given to Marduk, Nabu, Sin, Shamash and Ishtar.

The Canaanite Pantheon comprised her baalim, as nature gods, her gods of the inner consciousness, revealed in emotional states, gods of the events of life, who owned men, and spirits of the dead.

Sources in Ancient Literature in Egypt and Assyria disclose the material foundation upon which Semitic religion arose. From Babylon too come records showing the low moral tone of gods and goddesses in activities of world-

creation and deluge, the perfidy causing the fall of man, their jealousy of human beings which deprives man of immortality. They may go to Sheol where deeds are weighed and justice meted out, and from which only Ishtar has been able to return.

Social and Religious Ideals include the Babylonian Sabbath as a day of prohibitions for all except Marduk and Zarpanit; prophecies of a great deliverer, prophetic visions of victory in war; a social conscience as shown in the experiences of an eloquent peasant, and the admonitions of an Egyptian sage who longs for an ideal king to retrieve the ruin in his land, recalling the current belief that the king was son and viceroy of the gods.

Religious Practice in Canaan compels recognition of ethical elements in their faith in their highest god, and within their political institutions, which brought about practical and social benefits as loyalty to the king and to the gods was identical within their group. However there was no tolerance toward outsiders.

In Chapter III the conceptions of God in Israel are traced from the oldest yet found to 1000 B.C. The sources in her literature are first reviewed, to discover the ideas of God as set forth in war and march songs, proverbs and fables, prophetic blessings and oracles and early poems of the monarchy which became the nuclei of later literature.

Yahweh is to be highly exalted because of his power to overthrow and scatter his enemies. His presence may

be enshrined in the tables of stone within the Ark, or he may be spirit only, hovering over its cover, yet the very Presence of their Champion attends them either to win victories or by defeat to punish them for disobedience. Old Semitic deities in water, and in sun and moon next find recognition, but Deborah's song marks the beginning of an unmistakable conviction that Yahweh is sole giver of theophany, victory to the faithful and curse to the indifferent among his people. Yet even here "the stars fought against Sisera". Approval next rests upon personal character as found in David, and in the sacred person of Yahweh's anointed king, faulty though he be, while unworthy ambition, impurity, and unfilial conduct are accursed. Yahweh grants blessings of prosperity to his beloved ones, as Joseph. His supremacy and beneficence elicit praise even from the seer Balaam whose god is at war with Yahweh. The divine destiny of Yahweh's king is next heralded in songs concerning David and by David.

Religious practices of the time begin with a resume of that El-worship which acknowledges God as a <u>person</u> who supplements the nature-god. Yahweh, next introduced by Moses, delivers the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage and enters into covenant-relations with them showing at once his morality, his power, and his transcendence over the limits of other gods. Moses appears in the full glow of a new consciousness of God's presence and commission and the Hebrew struggles to find words to express the great experience, the splendor of their God, and the wonder of their relationship to him. Thus

to the more thoughtful among them the task for long generations to come was set.

In wilderness life Moses impressed upon them a very practical religion. They must present a united front against future foes. By religious rites and by his personal ideals and achievements he built up national consciousness within them, giving them a nucleus of law and a legacy of religion which combined two aspects: a nature-deity worship which became popular, and a moral passion for a great moral God which challenged the higher nature of his followers, therefore appealing to the few only.

Life in Canaan, with its dependence upon the proprietor-gods of the land, intermarriage with Canaanites, and the further temptation of prosperity put to rigid tests the principles of Moses, and the popular aspect of his religion opened the way to syncretism of Yahweh with Baal. The moral qualities within Israel's religion seemed less and less important.

Samuel as seer renews Moses' teachings of the higher order, giving religious interpretation for his day, convicting the people that sin had caused the capture of the Ark by the Philistine enemy, that obedience pleases God better than does sacrifice, that Yahweh withdraws even kingly prerogatives from those who neglect their duty to him. Samuel encouraged ecstatic prophecy, giving fresh impetus to the movement. David as an exile from Yahweh's territory mourns the separation from his God; as king he forearms

himself for battle by oracular consultation or tree-divination. Yahweh's three-year curse of famine he removed by slaying the sons of Saul, thereby satisfying Yahweh's anger over a broken covenant.

Chapter IV. The religious ideas of the period from 1000 to 750 are drawn from sources in songs of David and Solomon, prophetic blessings and oracles, and covenants, together with prophetic literature, evidences from J, inferences from E, and the inspiration of Amos. David rejoices in the crushing of his foes, and he sings exultantly of the covenant between his house and Yahweh. The Song of Hannah next exalts the divine giver of her son Samuel, while the Blessing of Moses exults in the prosperity of the tribes as established in Canaan. The parable of Nathan recalls Israel's king, even David, to the moral demands of the God he has dishonored. David admits his guilt, and repents. Sheba's battle-cry twice asserts the principle that under Yahweh, all men are brothers.

In the Code of the Covenant and in the J Decalogue Israel registers the gradual development of rules concerning the worship of Yahweh.

In popular practice the royal leaders in both kingdoms prove, for the most part, unworthy of their high privileges, while the problem of syncretism assumes greater and greater proportions. To be sure, Solomon built a magnificent Temple to Yahweh, but his international marriages brought in foreign gods to complicate the problem already becoming acute. David had often failed to understand

Yahweh's attitudes, and Solomon's boyhood had evidently lacked constructive religious instruction. Once on the throne, Solomon divorced the people's love for him and the God he outwardly represented, by oppressions incident to building a great material civilization.

The Dynasty of Omri continued the fatal policy of introducing foreign gods, Baal-Melkart and Ashtarte of Tyre finding their way into both kingdoms. Reform was sporadic, and the end of the period finds both centers of Yahweh-worship - at Jerusalem and at Bethel - hopelessly lacking in effective ministry.

The populace had welcomed the establishment of the monarchy as a victory for Yahweh, who thereby assumed proprietorship of the land. But popular religious practices, including as they did, great festivals and sacrifices of Canaanitish origin, had resulted in virtually changing Yahweh to Baal. Only his name remained, to recall the lofty ideals which it had formerly embodied.

But class-consciousness was growing and Israel's populace was the more ready for the fiery denunciations of Tyrian Baal-worship by Elijah. From the "Israel beyond Jordan", representing Rechabite and Nazirite sentiment, in time came the real leadership which again enthroned Yahweh. Elijah taught that Yahweh alone is to be worshiped in Israel. Further he proved that no other god has power in Yahweh's territory, thus passing beyond Moses. Elisha instigated the slaughter of Baal-worshipers by Jehu. Micaiah, in declaring that the apostasizing king will fall in battle,

becomes the first of the fearless proclaimers of vision by which Yahweh reveals his secrets.

Evidences from J and E. The history written by J, presents the Hebrew version of the creation, the fall of man, and the deluge. In his record Noah's curse becomes pivotal: Canaan is to become subject to Israel and Philistia. The fulfillment of this prophecy, in spite of seemingly unsurmountable difficulties, is J's story. Conceptions of God are anthropomorphic, yet he contributes to advancing thought by picturing Yahweh in control of all the forces of nature and of history, a God demanding righteousness and justice throughout the whole earth.

E. The record of E serves as a corrective, written a century later. Thought had been growing, and the sins of the ancestors as recorded by J are now explained. The monarchy, on the other hand, proves to have been wrong from the beginning. Yahweh, and no mortal man, is king of the Hebrews. God's over-ruling care, bringing blessing out of suffering, is illustrated by the story of Joseph. His interests are confined to Israel, to whom he reveals himself through dreams and visions. Prophecy becomes an instrument of the greatest worth to Yahweh and to man.

The rise of the new prophetic movement came with Amos, who declares for social justice and the ethical religion known to Israel's desert life. Yahweh is able to enforce his demands and this must spell destruction for the Northern Kingdom unless repentance comes soon.

In conclusion, the idea of God held at this time by Amos, was that of ethical and spiritual monotheism. It remained to his successors to explore and expound the vast potentialities of this ideal, just as the previous progressive ideals have been won whenever men, becoming thoughtful and consequently more spiritually minded, have found surer means of communion with the Divine, and have interpreted their convictions thus won in terms of life. For then, as now, <u>God lets himself be found</u>.

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